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THE

LIFE OF LADY GUION,

VOLUME FIRST.

Guyon, J. M. B. de la Motte

THE LIFE OF LADY GUION,

WRITTEN IN FRENCH, BY HERSELF,

NOW ABRIDGED,

AND TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH.

EXHIBITING

Her eminent Piety, Charity, Meekness, Resignation, Fortitude and Stability; her Labours, Travels, Sufferings and Services, for the Conversion of Souls to GOD; and her great Success, in some Places, in that best of all Employments on the Earth.

TO WHICH ARE ADDED,

ACCOUNTS OF THE LIVES OF WORTHY PERSONS,

WHOSE MEMORIES WERE DEAR TO LADY GUION.

IN TWO VOLUMES.---*VOL. I.*

From an English Edition, published at Bristol:

WITH A FEW ABRIDGMENTS, ETC.

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THE

TRANSLATOR's PREFACE.

THE reader will view, in the course of this translation, the progress of a holy pilgrim, not fictitious but real; a life of no common sort; from its birth upward attended with remarkable events, assaulted with troubles and inured to oppositions, a soul filled with the love of God; from him deriving, and instrumentally diffusing, a happiness undefiled, incorruptible, unhurt by ſtorms, and growing firmer in persecutions; ensuring on high its everlasting duration, in a state of boundless perfection and purity.

OF the sundry other species of biography, is there any worthy to be put in the balance againſt this? What are all the adventures of the curious, or acquisitions of the covetous, but the trivial blaze of a moment, when compared with eternity? What the splendour of military atchievements, but the detestable havock of the destroyers of mankind? What the dark intrigues of rivals, or profound politicks of statesmen, however successful? Are they not generally incompatible with our Lord's golden rule, *of doing unto all men as we would desire them to do unto us?* What the inventions of art, effusions of wit, or elaborate productions of human industry? They have their reward: But in a narrow limit. Their encomiums may spread around this globe, and that is their widest circle. What the highest elevations on earth, but tottering, or slippery, pinnacles?

SUCH are the subjects, and the lives, which en-

gross the greedy attention of a great part of mankind. Passing by the principal point unregarded, as it presents no pleasing entertainment to a vitiated taste, they therefore *prefer lying vanities*, though at the constant hazard of being fatally deluded, and drawn down by them to the habitations of their miserable victims. No attainment is safe and happy, but that of the soul which, through every obstacle, arises to the obedience of the laws and dictates of its Creator, to be fitted thereby for endless communion with him, and with all that are his, in his blissful and glorious kingdom.

THE following narrative affords a ſhining instance of one who attained it. Though her lot, in a dark and arbitrary country, subjected her to many great disadvantages; yet, through faithfulness to what it pleased God to discover to her, she appears at length, in purity of heart, to have surmounted them. This gives room to hope that her memoirs may prove of valuable service to many, an instructor to the ignorant, a monitor to the negligent, a confirmation to the pious, and a consolation to the afflicted.

ESPECIALLY such as, either in a single or a married state, meet with heavy crosses and disappointments, may be likely to relieve their dejection, and receive freſh encouragement, of the best kind, by tracing her steps in life; wherein they will see, that ſhe wisely applied her whole heart to * *lay aside every weight, and the sins which had easily beset her, to run with patience the race set before her, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of her faith; who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

* Heb. 12. 1, 2.

HENCE the most unreasonable hardships with her took the best turn; as, under the directing hand of her Redeemer, they became the means of her greater sanctification.

AN abridgment appeared more proper for publication than her whole account, because she seems to have designed it at first for private rather than public use. The same things, from her earnest desire to inculcate them, are rather too often repeated. Often also occur little incidents not so material; and such as peculiarly belong to that church of which she was a member. Often she makes long digressions. I have placed some of them at the foot of their several pages, in a smaller type. Some other remarks are also in like manner inserted, as in the course of the work, they occurred to

THE TRANSLATOR.

EXTRACT FROM THE EDITOR'S PREFACE IN FRENCH.

THIS preface is long. It begins with observations on persons sent of God, to communicate to men his eternal truth; and how Satan opposes them with all his arts, raising cruel clamours against them, with persecution on every side.

IT represents lady GUION a person so sent of God; as he had rendered her soul pure from every interested view, every selfish aim; her sole objects being his honour and the salvation of mankind; the many souls converted to a life of holiness, through her efficacious labours, being the seals of her ministry.

It intimates what torrents of abuse were poured out against her, not only from the corrupt part of the people, but from the violent prejudices even of some of the better sort; like those of the Apostle Paul, who, in the days of his misguided zeal, exerted his utmost efforts in persecuting the christians, and thought he was serving the cause of God therein; then adds, "No sooner had the author's writings made their appearance, than such as candidly perused them were fully convinced that they came from God, and tended to the salvation of souls. They could have no doubt of it, so long as they regarded nothing but God and his glory: But when the enemy, by his temptations, or the artifices of his agents, turned their view from that point, to other objects, several fell off; some of whom have been recovered, while others have remained so deeply rivetted in their alienation, as to oppose with all their might the very truth which before they had relished, and to use their endeavours to cause to be universally decried whatever could come from that source, as poison which every body ought to be on their guard against.

"By such means the writings and labours of Madam Guion, for a pretty long time, had been thought to be entirely extinguished. But God made the very persons, who designed their suppression, instrumental to their revival. For beside some of her papers, which they communicated to particular friends, the works which they published, occasionally, having passed into foreign countries, excited the curiosity of several, even among persons of high rank, to penetrate farther into an affair which had lately made so great a noise.

"THIS engaged them to inquire for her writings, and to read without prejudice such as they could find. They were touched with them in such a manner, as to endeavour to discover, and to publish for the glory of God and the good of souls, as many of them as they could meet with. Some German and English Lords and others, not content with bare reading, having heard that this Lady, since the death of her greatest adversary, had been discharged from her hard imprisonment, were resolved to make her a visit. To them she confided the history of her life, written and reviewed by herself, acquainting them that it was her intention that it should, after her decease, be published. She even gave her manuscript to a Nobleman amongst them, who was returning to England, and who has it at this time in his possession. She died at Blois, the 9th of June 1717, in the 70th year of her age.

"* IT was judged requisite no longer to delay this publication, being a copy taken, and carefully reviewed with her own original manuscript, in order to draw out that light which had not only been *put under a bushel*, but hid under heaps of shocking slanders, scandalous fables, ridiculous stories, and all sorts of malicious artifices, to strike into every one the utmost aversion thereto. Even the very † religious, who ought to have better governed their tongues, far from uttering calumnies, seem to have joined in them with pleasure, as we ‡ see in the

* Her own history of her life was printed three years after her death, viz. in 1720, at Cologne, in Germany.

† By the "religious," is meant Friars, Nuns, &c.

‡ Book III. chap. 4, of the life of the Bishop of Geneva.

anonymous author of the life of a late bishop, who has filled almost a whole chapter of his work with several such false and scandalous fables.

" HERE it will be seen that the words and writings of this chosen soul, far from being of the number of ideal productions, the studies of human wit, which generally give nothing but barren speculations and lifeless images, are lively and experimental realities, and divine truths, coming from a soul who, dead to itself, and to every thing else, had passed into God; and had been furnished by him with extraordinary gifts, for the communication of them to other souls for whose salvation he was pleased to employ her, after having prepared her for it, and consecrated her to himself, by the purifying trials and the daily crosses which attended her life.

" IF to any the state of long-continued probation she underwent seem strange, it is for want of duely observing what St. Paul says of Jesus Christ himself. *For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings;* Heb. xi. 10. The same Apostle farther assures us, that souls which God had chosen, " *He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son.*" Rom. viii. 9. This privation, by which she was purified and prepared for service, ought therefore not to astonish such readers as have never heard of any thing like it. It was the same in substance which was experienced by the great patriarchs, Job and David, and by many other enlightened souls, the memory of whose sanctity is had in honour at this day. It is a state consummated by the *sacrifice of eternal salvation*, or a consent to continue for ever, if

GOD pleases so to direct it, and for his glory, in this same state of *rigorous privation*, which so many saints have undergone; and wherein they would rather choose, as will be seen here, death itself than the least sin: A state which is at last followed with that of the purest union with GOD, and according as it pleases him, with gifts and graces of very high degrees. Here will be seen examples of several kinds, and of some as sublime as any that are to be met with any where. As there are in it many things which pass the natural comprehension of the human mind, it will be well, in reading them, to remember that saying of St. Paul, "The things of GOD knoweth no man, but the spirit of GOD." And again, "He that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man." 1. Cor. ii. 11, 15.

"THIS advice of the Apostle ought to make us very cautious of condemning the ingenuity, with which this purified soul has described, without disguise, a part of the persecutions which have been stirred up against her by all descriptions of persons. It will be seen in the course of this history, and especially toward the end of it, that GOD permitted her to pass over in silence the most considerable part, which regards her last persecutions and her imprisonment.

"As to what appertains to her first probations in her family, of which she lays open the particulars, not very favourable to the persons she speaks of, she has made use of so many precautions, to prevent any one's passing a judgment to their disadvantage, that assuredly none of those any way interested can have any reason of discontent, from such instances of mortification and patience here given, as may serve to the edification souls and to the glory of GOD. Here

is not any such action exposed as to fix a blemish on them, such as GOD has permitted the sacred writers to fix on the families of JACOB, DAVID, and several other saints who are honoured not the less on account of it. 'Tis only certain domestic vexations which he permitted; and she has sufficiently made the apology for the domestic persons by whom she has been exercised. She has declared, over and over, that they had at heart the fear of GOD, a sincere piety, and a good share of virtue and of charity; that their manner of acting towards her was a dispensation of GOD, to purify her, to which end he shut their eyes, that they might fall into the mistakes necessary to produce the effect he designed by it; and that, after that use had been made of it, all returned from their prejudices, humbled themselves before her, acknowledged the solidity of her virtue, and even became her panegyrists.

"A READER of any discernment ought not, in these occurrences, to dwell on the thoughts of the person who commits the faults, and look on himself as above such weaknesses. He ought rather to fear if GOD placed him in such probations, and left him to himself, that he would do an hundred times worse, and perhaps never recover from it. It is only for the person who receives such treatments, to look at them with meekness, silence, patience, suppression of the movements of nature, benignity, beneficence to every neighbour, thanksgiving to GOD, in order to be edified and built up thereby; and to pray to GOD for grace to enable him to imitate CHRIST in the like trials.

"FOR this excellent purpose has GOD permitted these things to be set before our eyes: For if all act-

ed this way, in all the occurrences of private life, and with all those they converse with, the same things which generally prove subjects and sources of dissensions and debates, of hostility and hatred, of wars, and every sort of evils temporal, and often eternal, would be changed into means of improvement in goodness, into spiritual succours, into schools to make us become saints, and like angels in purity, innocence, goodness and charity. They would render us true disciples and imitators of JESUS CHRIST. And indeed, without this no man is his, but in imagination; nor a christian but in name.

"FORMERLY, to purify the christians, GOD made use of the hatred and persecutions of the idolatrous pagans, who by their torments and their fires purified them like gold in the furnace. Now, since there are no more pagans for that purpose, it pleases GOD, [in divers instances,] in order to purify souls, to make use of the daily conduct, the humours and vexations of those we live with, relations, friends, acquaintance and neighbours. If we received their manner of behaving to us as christians, and according to the intention of God, it would render us true saints, and would procure us a peace unalterable and eternal, as appears in the sanctified soul, which gives us to see here that she derived those good effects by this way, which is without doubt a part of *the daily cross*, which, JESUS CHRIST says, *we must bear, if we will come after him*, and accompany him both in this world and the other."

PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS ON THE LIFE OF LADY GUION—BY THE TRANSLATOR.

I CONSIDERED in this publication that to trace the steps of any worthy life, singularly remarkable for arduous trials, and for excellent fruits arising from them, has a good effect on successors, allotted to undergo hard and heavy probations. It tends to animate their faith, patience, and trust in GOD for support, and for lasting benefit resulting from such trials becoming sanctified to them.

ON this account I thought, that to rescue from oblivion and obscurity the lives of some valuable foreigners, to render them known in the British dominions, would be agreeable to many pious persons; and perhaps be profitable in making the proper impressions on some not yet of that number, exciting them, timely and warmly, to pursue their highest and most lasting interest, and readily to sacrifice thereto every thing which would obstruct it.

IN regard to these foreigners I observe persons of piety differently affected. Some rejoice to find that such have been raised up in dark countries, who through fierce and repeated shocks have bravely and steadily stood, still adhering in heart to CHRIST; still concerned to *do justly*, to *love* and practice *mercy* and *charity*, and to *walk humbly* with GOD; whose hearts breathed, and whose actions tended to nothing else but *Glory to God in the highest; on earth Peace, Good-will* to men. They joyfully feel a brotherhood with such worthies, in the heavenly kindred, being convinced, with the good Apostle, that *in every nation, they that fear God and work righteousness are accepted with him.* Acts x. 35. Now what bet-

ter than this can they expect, who with a rigid harshness censure their memories, *after they have lived wholly to him who died for them?*

PIETY, or a dedication of the soul to GOD, faithfully to obey such of his discoveries as break through the thick surrounding clouds, is of an universal nature and extent, through all the climates and ages of the world. Men whose hearts are duly affected therewith, rejoice on the behalf even of the virtuous Gentiles, who *not having the law, are a law to themselves.* Rom. ii. 14.

YET I have met with some, esteemed pious both by themselves and others, who seem to despise the very best of any other nation or people but their own. They apprehend they spy *motes in their eyes*, while they see not *the beams in their own.* They have therefore little sympathy with their various sufferings for CHRIST, and for the testimony of a good conscience, with their long and cruel imprisonments on this account. Instead of feeling their hearts endeared to them, as valiant patient fellow-sufferers of the *one* LORD, *they* appear in their own eyes to be above them. *They* therefore reject all they did and suffered.

I CANNOT but wish these may open their doors to the reception of tender-hearted charity toward those who were, in their places, excellent patterns, probably far excelling their *forward censurers*, in a constant devotion of soul to GOD, even under such disadvantages as they have never known, and such oppressions as they have lived free from. May they calmly consider what spirit actuates them, only to find out and expose the defects of such, to raise

their own credit by depreciating humbler labourers and deeper sufferers!

WHEN the beloved Apostle, in his younger years complained of one casting out devils in CHRIST's Name, saying, he and his fellow disciples had forbidden him, seeing he followed not CHRIST with them. Our LORD replied, "Forbid him not; for he that is not against us, is for us." *Luke* ix. 49, 50.

SOME, perhaps at the very first, may be forward to cry out, "What a Papist!—Represented a servant of Christ, acting under his commission!—A Popish woman too!—Away with it."

I WOULD request these, if I could interpose a few words timely, not to be hasty in judgment; not to condemn without deliberation. It was a fiery zeal of the Jews against Christ himself, which caused him to be so hastily condemned to die.

As I would gladly remove every stumbling block from the threshold, and open the way to a profitable perusal of the following excellent life, I shall give due consideration to the two objections here started.

I. As to the first, let it be remembered, that the apostles of Christ, after they had so often heard the doctrines of his kingdom from his own lips, and beheld his wonderful works; after they had been sent forth by him, and wrought wonders under his commission; had been witnesses of his resurrection from the dead, and ascension into glory; had been favoured at the feast of Pentecost with the miraculous effusion of the Holy Ghost, and in consequence thereof raised

up into eminent service in the conversion of thousands; yet by all this did not lose their Jewish prejudices, refusing to eat what the law had prohibited, as common or unclean. How careful then should we be to lodge some grains of allowance for the prejudices of other servants of Christ, who have been alike sincere and devout in his service!

THE apostles retained a veneration for the ordinances and precepts of Moses, 'till an extraordinary vision was seen necessary to wean them from it. By this Peter was prepared to visit Cornelius and his household; which to the others appeared a heinous offence, 'till the account he gave reconciled them to it, and made them rejoice on behalf of the Gentiles: so ought every true christian to rejoice on behalf of such of the Papists, as have faithfully followed Christ, what way soever he was pleased to lead them. Even such as, through his great favour, are more enlightened, would do well, in a moderate frame of mind, to respect them: for though they do not see so far, or so clearly, they are truly valuable if faithful to what they see.

IN some things it pleases God to reveal what, when, and to whom he sees meet: and, when revealed, fidelity is required. Probably France might not yet be duely prepared for such a reformation as England has been blest with, and not worthy of it. Let Britons then, who love the christian religion, from reading the following life, learn the more to prize the privileges which kind Providence has rendered their birth-right.

WE are assured by divine authority "that God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation he that feareth him and worketh righteousness is accepted

with him."* Though Papists in general are dark, superstitious and cruel: yet some few there have been even among them, *destitute, afflicted, tormented* for righteousness sake, *of whom the world was not worthy*:† and such undoubtedly was M. Guion.

WHAT book of divinity, after the bible, is now ‡ more in use among christians of all denominations, than that of Thomas à Kempis, who was a strict member of the church of Rome? And what is the reason thereof, but that his lines are found to be lively and experimental, edifying, and suiting the inward concern of every true christian? But on this subject I forbear to enlarge, as in the following sheets we shall meet with others of the like good spirit with him.

IT is true indeed that this lady retained a veneration for the rites and institutions of that which (under the deep impressions of a strict education in it) she esteemed to be the only true catholic apostolic church: She therefore thought it her duty to be exemplary, zealous and constant, in the pious observance of them: Yet she both saw and suffered by the corruptions and abuses in them, and in their ministers, priests and confessors. What renders her memory honourable, is the dedication of herself to serve God in purity of heart and life, during a course of fifty years, viz. from the twentieth of her age to the end of her days. The reader may find, for his own encouragement, that her devotion to her Creator became fixed, and continued immovable. He may observe a progressive advancement in christian experience, in the simplicity and spirituality of the gospel; a growth of stature and

* Acts x, 34. 35. † Heb. xi, 37, 38.

‡ Printed in the year 1772.

strength in the divine life; an exemption from human or slavish fears, in the midst of imminent dangers, both by sea and land; far from shrinking when the swelling floods of persecution rose high, and beat vehemently against her, a readiness to meet them, a holy trust in the regard and all-sufficiency of her God, a willingness to suffer in and for his cause; and therein a patience, peace, and joy, which brought the sure evidence of the divine spring from whence they flowed.

I WOULD not therefore have any to make so light of these most weighty matters, as, merely because she was born and lived a papist, to treat her life and memory with contempt, as this is what the worst of papists violently, and the generality of papists ignorantly, have done, why should any protestants think it best to imitate their practice herein?* So much for the first objection.

* A friend of mine, in a letter to me on this subject, writes thus, "It is really attended with edification, to observe how true piety may flourish, though growing up with tares of superstition, &c. I own, my mind is, *let them grow together*; [that is, let them not be thrown out, in abridging the Work,] lest, whilst the tares are plucked up, the corn should be damaged; and divine providence is well able to preserve the sincere hearted from sustaining any harm. I have often thought the Almighty might permit Lady Guion to be blinded in some things, not essential, in order that she might be the more useful amongst her own community; if so, the same good end might be answered in one nation, as well as another.

"I have many years been in possession of, and well acquainted with, all that Lady's works; and have earnestly desired in my heart they might wear an English dress.—I doubt not but divine providence will give its sanction to what so eminently displays an inward vital spirit of true godliness, that must recommend itself to all Wisdom's children."

II. As to the second, allow me to observe, that far too many have entertained an unreasonable prejudice against the female sex. As protestants profess to form their judgment of divine things by what is laid down in the sacred records; if we inspect them, in the old testament we find some of the females honourable, and proposed for patterns in their conduct to future generations; some of them elected of God for prophetesses; and one of them, viz. Deborah, both for a judge and a mother in Israel.

AGAIN, the prophet Joel was favoured from Heaven with a certain foresight that God *would pour out of his spirit on all flesh*, young and old, male and female; that from hence both *sons and daughters should prophecy*, &c.† Some indeed are for confining the accomplishment of this prediction to the memorable day of pentecost, immediately after our Lord's ascension: But to prevent such a limitation of it, the eminent apostle Peter at that time expressed himself to the people in these terms, "The promise is unto you and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.†"

PURSUANT hereto, it pleased the Lord, both among the converted Jews and Gentiles, to dignify some of the female sex, and to authorize them to act under his commission. Philip the evangelist and deacon, had four daughters who were prophetesses.‡ The apostle Paul in his last chapter to the Romans, names several women who were saints, and laboured in the Lord, as Priscilla, Junia, Tryphena, Tryphosa, Persis, Julia. In his first epistle to the Corinthians, chap. xi. 5. 6. he directs how women who *pray* or *prophecy*, should con-

* Joel ii. 28. † Acts ii. 39. ‡ Acts xxi. 8, 9.

duct themselves in the exercise of those gifts. What he means in this epistle, by *prophesying*, he explains, chap. xiv. 3. to be *speaking unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort.* In his epistle to the Galatians he writes chap. iii. 28. that *male and female are one in Christ Jesus.* In his epistle to the Philippians, chap. iv. 3. he speaks very affectionately of women who *laboured with him in the gospel.* All this very evidently shews that, far from degrading and despising that sex, we ought highly to esteem such of them as have, with an ardent, exemplary, unshaken fidelity, devoted themselves to the service of their Creator. Such an one doubtless was the elect lady, to whom the apostle John wrote his second epistle. And as the celebrated Fenelon, Archbishop of Cambray, who to fine talents joined a deep humility, and a fervency of love to God and mankind, honoured both the life and the doctrines of Lady Guion, so far as to suffer disgrace for it; at least it laid the foundation of that charge against him on which was grounded the order of the King of France for his banishment from the Court; this, I hope, will add some weight in her favour, as they were fellow-servants of God, and fellow-sufferers in his cause.*

* In order to degrade worthy women, some advance two expressions of the apostle Paul, by him designed as cautions to the unworthy.

The 1st is in 1. Corinth. xiv. 34, 35. "Let your women keep silence in the churches—and if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home." It manifestly appears in this very chapter, that contentions and confusion had entered into the Corinthian church; to which disorder some forward loquacious women had contributed not a little. He never meant it to oppose what in the same epistle he advises, of women praying or prophesying, viz. 1. Cor. xi. 5. not to

ALL these observations I think, if duly attended to, will be a full answer to every hasty zealot, of the kind above hinted at; and I hope may suffice to remove, or at least help in some degree toward removing, the two aforesaid prejudices.

III. As this is a religious tract, an account of a refined christian, led by Christ her Lord in a singular path, and faithful to his guidance in it, it had been more agreeable to me if written in Latin (like Thomas à Kempis's book) than in French; for this reason, that the Latin with the other ancient languages retains the uncorrupted simplicity of address; whereas a servile adulation, often tinctured with falsehood, hath flowed into the French, with the other modern languages of Europe; the distinction of singular number to one and of plural to more is hereby partly lost. She, writing in French, uses these alterations: yet let not any readers think amiss of her for it, but charitably consider the prejudices inherent to her, from her education, situation and connexions in life. And further, that she had not found it required of her to desist from, and endeavour to break

discourage those excellent women whom he so much esteemed, who, in the right order and unity, had laboured with him in the gospel. Rom. xvi. and Philip. iv. 3.

The 2d is in 1. Tim. ii. 12. "I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence." I think every impartial considerate person must allow this to be good counsel. Modesty and a proper regard to the subordination of the sex are true and solid ornaments of the females: and all usurpation of authority in them, over the men, carries with it a very disagreeable aspect; as it is evidently not right: But it is undeniable that Christ (whose spirit is not to be limited by the creature) may preach to us by such whom he has prepared for it; whether males or females, as they are both one in him. Gal. iii, 28.

through, that impropriety; to restore the use of speech among men to its original sincerity and purity. Where she accosts her fellow creatures, her own style or manner of address, is given, a translation being properly the turning of her own language into English. But as she in this respect goes on further to address the Most High in the same style and manner; and as that is what has not yet been admitted in English, (and I hope never will,) I have thought best to render it conformable to the propriety and solemnity of the English manner of address, in prayers and thanksgivings to God. Where she exposes her own faults, as often she does, I shall think it my duty to expose them also, for that caution to others which she intended thereby.

IV. In the church of Rome persons are obliged to have, or to choose, some ecclesiastic for a director, or spiritual guide, in relation to matters of faith and duty; to whose injunctions a ready and punctual obedience is required. She thought it her duty to give to others an example of submission herein: and it appears to have been entirely in obedience to the command of her director, that she (when advanced in age) wrote the following history of her life, and introduced into it more minute particulars than otherwise she would have done; because he had enjoined her to omit nothing,* not even the smallest matters she could recollect.

* Except the detail of her sins, fearing probably, from her, such a catalogue of them as would give him no pleasure to peruse.

THE

LIFE OF LADY GUION,

PART FIRST.

FROM HER BIRTH 'TILL HER LEAVING FRANCE.

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THE

LIFE OF LADY GUION.

PART FIRST.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION,

ADDRESSED BY HER TO HER DIRECTOR.

SINCE you require me to write you the whole series of a life so extraordinary, so fruitful of pains and trials of patience, as mine has been, I am willing with all my heart to obey your order, though to me the task appears painful in my present condition, which admits not of much reflection. I could wish extremely, that it were in my power to convey into your soul an adequate idea of all the goodness of God to me, and the excess of my ingratitude: but it would be impossible for me to do it, as well because you desire me not to be too particular in enumerating my sins, as because I have forgot many things. I will try however to acquit myself to the best of my ability, relying on your assurance of never exposing it, and that you will burn it, when God shall have given it the effect he intends for your spiritual profit, for which I would gladly sacrifice every thing; persuaded as I am of his designs in regard to you, both for your own sanctification, and that of others.

But at the same time I assure you that you will never attain thereto, except through much pain and la-

pour, and in a path widely different from your expectation. Nor will you be surprized thereat, if once convinced that God does not establish his great works but upon NOTHING. It seems that he destroys in order to build, to the end that the temple, which he designs for himself, having been built up with great pomp and magnificence, yet only built by the hands of men, may be in such manner destroyed as that there may not remain * *one stone left upon another.* Such destruction must serve for the Holy Ghost, to form a temple which shall be built by his own power only.

Oh that you could comprehend the depth of this mystery, and conceive the secrets of the conduct of God, † *revealed to babes, but hid from the wise and great* of the world, who imagine themselves to be the Lord's counsellors, capable of penetrating the depth of his ways; and to have attained that divine wisdom, which is ‡*hid from the eyes of all living*, that is of such as live to themselves and in their own works; and *kept close from the fowls of the air*, that is from those who, by the vivacity of their intellects, and the force of their elevation, mount up to heaven; and think to fathom the height, depth, breadth and extent of God.

This divine wisdom is unknown even to those who pass in the world for persons of extraordinary illumination and knowledge. To whom then is it known, and who can tell us any tidings thereof? *Destruction and death* assure us that they have heard with their ears of its fame and renown. 'Tis then in dying to everything, and to all regards thereto, in order to pass into God, and to live in him alone, that one has any

* Matth. xxiv. 2. and Luke xxi. 5, 6. † Matth. xi. 25. and Luke x. 21. ‡ Job. xxviii. 21, 22.

comprehension of true wisdom. Oh, how little are her ways known and the conduct she holds over her choicest servants! Scarce does one discover any thing thereof, but, surprised at the difference betwixt the truth thus discovered and the ideas formerly entertained, such an one cries out with St. Paul, "Oh the depth of the knowledge and wisdom of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out."*

He judges not of things as men do, who *call good evil and evil good*, and who regard as great righteousness things abhorred in his sight, and which (according to the prophet) are in his estimation but † *as filthy rags*. These principles of self-righteousness, like those of the Pharisees, will meet with nothing from him but wrath, far from being the objects of his love, and subjects of his recompenses: as he assures us himself, ‡ "Except your righteousness exceed that of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven." Which of us has a righteousness that comes up any thing near to that of the Pharisees, and in doing less good has not more of ostentation? Which of us is not pleased to be righteous in our own eyes, and in those of others, and to think that sufficient to satisfy God? Yet we may see the indignation which our Lord, as well as his forerunner, manifested against such kinds of persons. He who was the perfect model of tenderness and meekness, yet such as was deep, and came from the heart, not that affected meekness, which under the form of a *dove* hides the heart of a *hawk*, constantly treated those self-righteous persons with austerity,

* Rom. xi. 33. † Isai. lxiv. 6. ‡ Matth. v. 20.

and seemed to dishonour them before men. The colours in which he represented them, appeared strange, while he looked on sinners with mercy and love; protesting that for them only he was come, *that it was the sick who needed a physician;* and though the Saviour of Israel, he came only *to save the lost sheep of the house of Israel.**

Oh love! it seems thou art so jealous of the salvation thyself gives, that thou preferest the sinner to the righteous, the poor sinner who, seeing in himself nothing but misery, is as it were constrained to hate himself. He casts himself, as otherwise lost, into the arms of his Saviour, plunges with faith in the sacred bath of his blood, comes forth *white as wool*, and all full of love for him who, alone able to remedy his maladies, has had the charity to do it. The more enormous his crimes have been, the more he loves him; and his acknowledgments are so much the stronger as the debts remitted have been the greater; while the righteous, buoyed up with his good works as he presumes, seems to hold his salvation in his own hands, and regards heaven as a recompence due to his merits. He exclaims against all sinners, in the bitterness of his zeal, represents the gates of mercy as barred to them, and heaven as a place to which they have no right: while he thinks an admission into it the more secure for himself, as he appears in a higher degree to have merited it. His Saviour is in a manner useless to him, he is so laden with his own merits. Oh how long will he bear the flattering load! While those sin-

* Matth. ix. 11. 12. 13.

ners, divested of every thing, fly on the wings of faith and love into the arms of their Saviour, who freely gives them what he has infinitely merited for them.

In the former how much love for themselves, and how little for God! They bless and admire themselves in their works of righteousness, which they esteem as the cause of their happiness. These works are no sooner exposed to the sun of righteousness, than it discovers all their iniquity, and makes them appear as sordid as the mischief which they do to the heart.

St. Paul assures us that *the faith* of *Abraham was imputed to him for righteousness.* This is truly beautiful: for it is certain that that eminent Patriarch did all his actions with very great righteousness; and yet he did not see them as such. Being entirely free from self love, and a fondness for his own actions, his faith was founded on the salvation to come by Christ. *He hoped in him, even against hope itself:* and *this was imputed to him for righteousness,* * viz. a righteousness pure, simple and genuine, merited for him by Christ, not a righteousness wrought by himself, and regarded as of himself.

All this may appear a digression, very remote from the subject I proposed at first to write upon: but it will help to guide you insensibly to it, and let you see that God takes, to accomplish his works in, either converted sinners, whose past iniquity may serve for a counterpoise to their elevation; or persons in whom he totally overturns their self-righteousness, and the temple raised by the hands of men, works built on the moving sand instead of being founded on the liv-

* Rom. iv. 18. 22.

ing stone Jesus Christ. All that he came into the world to establish is effected by the destruction of the very things he designs to build. He established his Church in a way that seemed to destroy it. What a strange way is it of establishing a law, and giving it a sanction when the legislator is, by the chief teachers and powers of the world, condemned as an infamous malefactor, to a reproachful and cruel death! Oh were it but enough known how opposite to the designs of God self-righteousness is, it would be an endless subject of humiliation, a distrust of all that is rested on as our only support.

This being premised, it will be less difficult for you to conceive the designs of God in the favours he has conferred on the most miserable of creatures, favours of which I had rendered myself very unworthy. From the supreme love of his own power, and a just jealousy of the honours which men pay to other men, on account of the good which he places in them, it has pleased him to take the most unworthy object that ever existed, to make known that his graces are the effects of his will, not the fruit of our merits; that it is the property of his wisdom to destroy what is proudly built, and to build what is destroyed, to make use of *weak things to confound the mighty*, and to employ in his service such as appear vile and contemptible.

This he does in a manner so astonishing, as to render them the objects of the scorn and contempt of all creatures. It is not to procure them the approbation of men, that he makes use of them for the salvation of those same men; but to render them the objects of their dislike, and the butt of their insults; as you will see in the narrative of the life which you have ordered me to write.

CHAPTER II.

I was born, as I have been told, on Easter Eve, the 13th of April 1648.* My parents made a high profession of piety, especially my father, who inherited it from his ancestors; for in his family they reckoned almost as many saints as persons who composed it. I had no sooner received life than I had like to have lost it, and to die without baptism.† I was carried to a nurse. When there, my father received the news that I was dead; at which he was much afflicted: but soon after a messenger arrived, informing him that I had given some signs of life. He then took a Priest, and brought him to me himself; but on his arrival he was told that the sign of life I had given was only an expiring sigh, and that I was absolutely dead. The Priest returned, and my father also, in the utmost distress.

This held so long, that, should I tell it, it would appear incredible. Oh my God, it seems to me as if thou permitted a conduct so singular toward me, in order that I should become the more sensible of the greatness of thy providence over me, and of my being indebted to thee alone for my salvation, and not to the efforts of any creature. Had I died then, I had perhaps never known or loved thee; and this heart, created for thee alone, might have been sepa-

* She was born at Montargis, a town in the province of Orleanois, fifty miles south from Paris. Her name was Jeane Marie Bouviers de la Motue Guion, taken from several of her family, to preserve their memory, according to the custom of people of quality in that country.

† Owing to her feeble state, she was not baptised till the 24th of May.

rated from thee, without ever having been united to thee. Oh thou who art the sovereign felicity! That there now remains to me the consolation of having known thee, of having loved, sought, and followed thee, of having sacrificed myself in the strength of pure love to thee, with every thing in any wise appertaining to me: that I have, with a heart full of gratitude, sought thy honour, glory, interests, and not my own: that I have loved all the chastisements which thy justice directed, and hand inflicted, or ever shall inflict on me, so as to join on the side of that justice against myself; all this is owing to thy free grace and goodness.

These alternatives of death and life were signal omens of what was to befal me; one while dying by sin, another while living by grace. Death and life had a combat; but life proved victorious. Oh might I but hope that, in the conclusion, life will forever be victorious over death! Doubtless it will be so, if thou alone live in me, oh my God, who art at present my only life and my only love.*

At the age of two years and a half I was, for a short space, placed with the Ursulines. After my return home, my mother, who was not very fond of girls, neglected me too much, leaving me to the care of women still more negligent. In the mean time God protected me, else I had perished: for through my extreme vivacity, I was frequently falling into one accident or other.

* Her constitution was all along so tender and delicate; her poor body pained and weakened with distempers so frequent, various and violent; so often reduced to the last extremity; that it appears a miracle, from the hand of God, that her life, through all the desperate attacks on it, was prolonged to its seventieth year.

I was four years of age when the Dutchess of Montbason came to the Benedictines.* As there was a great friendship between her and my father, she entreated him to place me there, because I greatly diverted her. Here I saw none but good examples: and as I was naturally disposed to goodness, I followed it when I found nobody to turn me from it. Young as I was, I loved to hear of God, to be at church, and drest in the habit of a little nun.

One day imagining the frightful notions, which had been given me of Hell, were only designed to intimidate me, because I was active and sprightly; I saw that night, in a dream, so frightful an image of Hell, that though but a mere child, I never forgot it. It appeared to me a place of horrible darkness, where souls were tormented: my place was shewn me there; which made me weep bitterly, and cry out, "Oh! my God, if thou would, in mercy, only grant me some days of life, never more would I offend thee." Thou granted me them, and withal a courage to serve thee which surpassed my age. I wanted to go to confess, without saying any thing of it to any body: but being so little, the mistress of the boarders went with me. She was surprised to hear me begin with accusing myself of having entertained thoughts contrary to the faith. The Confessor, smiling, asked me "What they were?" I told him that "I had doubted of Hell; but that I now doubted no longer of it."

* Ursulines, Benedictines, Dominicans, &c. are among Roman Catholics, religious orders, so called in honour of St. Ursula, Benedict, Dominic, &c. The house of the Ursulines was a Nunnery, and beside that, a Seminary, for the tuition or education of young maids; in which office some of the Nuns were employed.

After my confession I felt in myself an inexpressible fervour, to that degree that I even wished to endure martyrdom. Those good girls, to divert themselves, and to see how far this rising fervency would carry me, bade me prepare myself for it. I prayed to thee, my God, with ardour; which being both new and delightful, was an assurance of thy love: it gave me courage, and made me more eagerly desire that martyrdom might be granted me, that thereby I might go to see my God. The girls had no sooner set me on my knees, on a cloth that was spread, but, seeing a great cutlass lifted up behind me, I cried out, "I was not at liberty to die without my father's consent." They said then, "I should be no martyr; and that I only made that excuse to free myself from it." And indeed it was true. However, I was after it much afflicted. My consolation left me; and something reproached me that I wanted courage to go immediately to Heaven.

From this house I was soon after removed on account of my great and frequent indispositions. Being now returned home, my mother, little regarding me, left me to the care of domestics. From them I could learn nothing but evil, and contract a familiarity with it: for such was my disposition that good or evil examples attracted me. When I saw good done I did it, and thought not once about any thing contrary: but when I saw evil done I was too prone to imitation, and to forget the good. My brother being the great darling of my mother, nothing in me could she see but faults, and yet omitted the proper care to reform them. Being too much left to myself, I was exposed to a multitude of dangers. What defects or wrong habits I had, were such as would easily have been re-

medied, had I been under any proper care. I do not remember that at that time I did amiss in any thing, except in saying a number of pretty little things, as I thought, to divert those about me. Keeping myself at a distance then from my mother, as much as possible, I took pernicious liberties, and contracted bad habits. One day my father caught me at play with some children in the street, in such a way as ill suited my rank and quality: so much was he moved at the sight, as he tenderly loved me, that without saying a word to any body, he immediately took me to the Ursulines.

In this chapter she makes a long digression on the defect of duty in mothers, who neglect their children, especially daughters; who do not duely keep them under their own eye, endeavouring to instruct, and inspire them with an early love to piety and virtue; setting forth the fatal consequences of such neglect; and how many, by means of it, become quite lost, who might otherwise have been like angels on earth: also, on the injudicious conduct of such as keep their children, with themselves, too long at their devotions; overcharging them with a food which they cannot yet relish, and which their tender stomachs are too weak to digest; which creates in them such a disgust for it, that, when it would be proper for them, they run off and avoid it. Like birds in a cage, as soon as they find any opening they fly out, and return no more.

She also observes that some others deviate into such an extreme, as to be whole days at their devotions, while they leave their daughters loose, to run into all sorts of unguarded and offensive liberties; and asks, "What is the good of such sacrifice as occasions iniquity?" Let them, says she, take due care of their daughters, treat them as sisters, and make them fond of their presence, instead of shunning it: so would they prevent the course of disorders, and these daughters, becoming mothers, would educate their children as they had been educated themselves. She then earnestly presses an uniform conduct to be held over children, in order to keep up an affectionate union amongst them; observing that the unjust partiality and preference of some over others often cause a jealousy and secret hatred, which increase with their years, and continue as long as life. How many do

we see, the idols of a house, who treat their brothers or sisters as slaves, after the example of the fathers and mothers, till the idolized child becomes the scourge of the parents, and the poor abandoned child their only consolation! No more should any think of forcing their children into convents, and of sacrificing some to exalt others: thereby would be removed the enormities of the cloysters, because then there would no more be any but persons called of God, and whose vocation he would support: whereas these persons, who make the vocation of their children, are the cause of their despair and ruin, by the irreconcilable hatred which they retain against their brothers and sisters, who are the innocent causes of their temporal and eternal misery. Oh parents, what reason have ye to serve them thus? "This child, say ye, is the disgrace of human nature." For that very reason ye ought to love and pity it the more. Perhaps ye are the cause of its disgrace: increase then your charity to it. Or it may be, God has given it to be the object of your compassion, and not of your hatred. Is not such a child sufficiently afflicted to see himself deprived of the natural advantages which the others possess, without your augmenting that affliction by your unjust and cruel procedure? The child, whom ye despise, may one day prove a Saint; and perhaps that other, whom ye cherish, may turn out a Reprobate.

CHAPTER III.

I was then near seven years of age. In this house were two half sisters of mine, the one by my father, the other by mother; for my parents had both been married before they were to each other. My father recommended me to the care of his daughter, who I think was one of the most sensible and religious of her time and the most proper to tutor young girls. This was for me, oh my God, an effect of thy providence, and of thy love, and the first means of my salvation; for as she loved me much, her affection made her discover in me many good qualities, which in thy great goodness thou hadst implanted in me. She endeavoured to cultivate them. I believe that if I had continued in such wise and good hands, I should have had as much virtue, as I have since contracted of vicious habits.

This good sister employed her time in instructing me in piety, and in such branches of learning as were suitable to my age and capacity. She had good talents, and improved them well, was frequent in prayer, and her faith as great and as pure as most. She denied herself every other satisfaction, to be with me, and to instruct me: nay, such was her affection for me, that it made her find, as she told me, more pleasure with me than any where else.

If I made her agreeable answers, more from chance than judgment, she thought herself well paid for all her labour. In short, under her care I soon became mistress of most things suitable for me, insomuch that many aged persons, of some rank and figure,

could not have answered to the things which I did. As my father often sent for me home to see me, one time I found the Queen of England there. I was then near eight years of age. My father told the Queen's confessor, that if he wanted a little amusement, he might entertain himself with me, and propound some questions to me. He tried me with several very difficult ones, to which I returned such pertinent answers, that he carried me to the Queen, and said to her, "Your Majesty must have some diversion with this child." She also tried me; and was so well pleased with my lively answers, and my manners, that she demanded me of my father with no small importunity, assuring him that she would take particular care of me, designing me for maid of honour to the princess. But my father resisted so far as to disoblige her. Doubtless it was God who caused this refusal, and thereby turned off the stroke which might have probably intercepted my salvation: for being so weak as I was, what could I have done at court but be quite lost there?

I went back to the Ursulines, where my good sister continued her affection. But as she was not the mistress of the boarders, and as I was obliged sometimes to go along with them, I contracted bad habits; I became addicted to lying, peevishness and indevotion, passing whole days without thinking of God; though he watched continually over me, as the sequel will manifest. I did not remain long under the power of such vicious habits; for my sister's cares recovered me. I loved much to hear of God, was not weary at church, loved to pray, had tenderness for the poor, and a natural dislike for persons whose doctrine was judged unsound, having sucked in, with my milk, the

purity of the faith: and God has always continued to me that grace, in the midst of my greatest infidelities.

There was at the end of the garden a little chapel, dedicated to the child Jesus. Thither I betook myself for devotion; and, for some time, carrying my breakfast thither every morning, hid it all behind his image; for I was so much a child, that I thought I made a considerable sacrifice in depriving myself of it. Being also delicate in the choice of my food, I wished to mortify myself; but found self-love still too prevalent, to submit to such mortification. After this when they were cleaning out the chapel, they found behind the image what I had left there, and presently guessed that it was I, as they had seen me every day going thither: and God, who lets nothing pass without a recompence, rewarded me for this little infantine devotion.

One day my companions, who were large girls, to divert themselves, went to dance over a deep pit, which served for a sink to the kitchen, and a common sewer to carry off the filth. It was deep, and covered with boards for fear of accident. When they retired I wanted to imitate them; but the boards broke under me, and I fell into the frightful gutter; yet hanging by a little bit of timber, in such manner, that I was plunged in the filth, without being stifled with it: a figure of the inward state which I had to undergo, when in the horrible pit, which I was unable of myself to get out of. But God, in his goodness preserved me in each, and brought me out of them; defiled indeed for a time, but not destroyed! I was at the gates of death, and yet death was not permitted to have any power over me. What support had the little stick been on which I rested, if the

tially found a Bible in my chamber, and having both a fondness for reading and a happy memory, I spent whole days in reading it from morning to night, and learned entirely the historical part. Yet I was really very unhappy in this house: for the other boarders, being older, plagued me with very grievous persecutions. I was so much neglected, as to meat and drink, that I fell away, and became quite emaciated. Several other crosses I had, which were hard enough for me to bear.

CHAPTER IV.

After having been here about eight months, my father took me home again. My mother kept me more with her, having a higher regard for me than before; yet she still preferred my brother, which was so visible, that every one spoke of it with dislike; for when I was sick, and met with any thing I liked, he demanded it; it was then taken from me, and given to him, though he was in perfect health. He was continually giving me new vexations. One day he made me mount upon the top of the coach; when he had done that, he threw me down on the ground; and by the fall I was bruised. At other times he beat me; but whatever he did, however wrong, was winked at, or had the most favourable construction put upon it. This conduct soured my temper: I had little disposition to do good, saying, "I was never the better for it." It was not then for thee alone, oh my God, that I did good; since I ceased to do it when it met not with such a reception from others as I wanted. Had I known how to make a

right use of this crucifying conduct which thou held over me, I should have made a good progress. Far from turning me out of the way, it would have made me turn more entirely to thee. With jealous eyes I looked on my brother, seeing the wide difference made between him and me. Whatever he did, he always did well; but the blame of all fell on me. My sisters by the mother made their court to her, by caressing him, and abusing me. It is true, I was bad: I was relapsed into my former faults of lying and peevishness. With all these faults, I was very tender and charitable to the poor, prayed to God assiduously, loved to hear any speak of him, and to read good books.

I doubt not but such a long train of inconsistencies will surprize you: but what follows will surprize you much more, when you will see those manners of acting gather strength with age; and that reason, far from correcting such an unreasonable procedure, served only to give more force and latitude to my sins. It seemed, oh my God, as if thou poured out thy graces on me, in proportion as my ingratitude increased. There passed in me what passes in the siege of cities. Thy grace besieged my heart, and I thought of nothing but of defending it against thy attacks, redoubling every day my iniquities, to hinder thee from taking it. When it seemed as if thou was going to be victorious, I erected counter-batteries, and threw up ramparts to stop thy goodness, and repel the force of thy favours. There was nothing less than thyself, oh, my divine love, to break them down, who, by thy sacred fire, was stronger than death itself, to which sin has brought me so often over and over.

I cannot hear with patience any one who says,

"We are not free to resist grace." I have made too long and fatal an experience of my liberty. I closed up all the avenues of my heart, that I might not so much as hear that secret voice of God, which was calling me to himself. I have indeed from my tenderest youth, passed through a series of grievances, either by maladies or by persecutions. The girl to whose care my mother left me, in dressing my head used to beat me, and did not make me turn it but with rage and blows. Every thing seemed in concert to punish me. My father knew nothing of all this; for his love to me was such that he would not have suffered it. I loved him much, but at the same time I feared him, so that I told him nothing of it. My mother was often teazing him with complaints of me, to which he made no other reply than, "There are twelve hours in the day; she will grow wiser." This rigorous proceeding was not the worse for my soul, though it soured my temper, which was otherwise mild and easy. But what caused my greatest hurt, was, that not being able to endure those who treated me ill, I chose to be among those who caressed me, in order to corrupt and spoil me.

My father, seeing I was now grown pretty tall, placed me in Lent among the Ursulines, to have my first communion at Easter, at which time I was to complete my eleventh year. And here my most dear sister, under whose inspection my father placed me, redoubled her cares to cause me to make the best preparation possible for this act of devotion. I thought now of giving myself to God in good earnest. I often felt a combat between my good inclinations and my bad habits. I even did some penances. As I

was almost always with my sister, and as the boarders in her class, which was the first, were very reasonable and civil, I became such also while among them. It had been violence to educate me badly; for my very nature was strongly disposed to goodness, and I loved every thing that tended thereto. Easily won with mildness, I did with pleasure whatever my good sister desired. At length Easter arrived, and I made my first communion (which was preceded by a general confession) with much joy and devotion. And in this house I staid till Whitsuntide. But as my other sister was mistress of the second class, she demanded me in her week to be with her in that class. Her manners, so opposite to the other's, made me relax my former piety. I felt no more that new and delightful ardour which had seized my heart at my first communion. Alas! it held but a short time; for my faults and failings were soon reiterated, and drew me off from the care and duties of religion.

As I now grew very tall for my age, and more to my mother's liking than heretofore, she took care to deck and dress me out, to make me see company, and to take me abroad with her. She took an inordinate pride in this beauty, which God had put on me, only to bless and praise him, which yet has been to me a source of pride and vanity. Several suitors offered to me. But as I was not yet twelve years of age, my father would not listen to any proposals. I loved reading much, and shut myself up all alone every day to read without interruption.

What proved effectual to gain me over entirely to my God, at least for a time, was that a nephew of my father's (whose life is written in the relation of foreign missions) passed by our house going with the

bishop of ——, to Cochinchina. I happened at that time to be gone a walking with my companions, which I seldom did. At my return he was gone. They gave me an account of his sanctity, and the things he had said. I was so touched therewith, that I was overcome with sorrow. I cried all the rest of the day and of the night. Early in the morning, I went in great distress to seek my confessor. I said to him, "What my father, am I the only person in our family to be lost? Alas! help me in my salvation." He was greatly surprized to see me so much afflicted, and comforted me in the best manner he could, not thinking me so bad as I was; for in the midst of my backslidings I was docile, punctual in obedience, careful to confess often; and since I went to him, my life was more regular. Oh thou God of love, how often hast thou knocked at the door of my heart! how often terrified me with appearances of sudden death! Yet all these only made a transient impression. I presently returned again to my infidelities; but this time thou took me, and I may say quite carried off my heart. Alas, what grief I now sustained for having displeased thee! what regrets, what exclamations what sobbings! Who would have thought to see me, but that my conversion would have lasted as long as my life? Why didst thou not, oh my God, utterly take this heart to thyself, when I gave it to thee so fully, or if thou didst take it then, oh why didst thou let it revolt again afterward? it was not but that thou wast strong enough to hold it; but it seems to me that thou chose, in leaving me to myself, to cause thy mercy to shine more conspicuously; and the extent of my iniquities to serve for a lasting monument of thy goodness.

I immediately applied myself to every part of my duty. I made a general confession with great compunction of heart. I frankly confessed all that I knew with torrents of tears. I became so changed, that I was scarce to be known. I would not for ever so much have made the least voluntary slip; and they found not any matter for absolution when I confessed. I discovered the very smallest faults: and God did me the favour to enable me to conquer myself in many things. There were left only some remains of passion, which gave me some trouble to conquer: but as soon as I had, by means thereof, given any displeasure even to the domestics, I begged their pardon, in order to subdue at the same time my wrath and my pride; for wrath is the daughter of pride. A person truly humbled suffers not any thing to put him in a rage. As it is pride which dies the last in the soul, so it is passion which is last destroyed in the outward conduct. A soul thoroughly annihilated, or dead to itself, finds nothing of rage left in itself.

There are persons who, being much filled with the unction of grace, and with a savoury peace at their entrance of the resigned path of light and love, think they are come thus far: but they are greatly mistaken. This they will readily discover, if they are heartily willing to examine two things; first, if their nature is lively, warm and violent, (for I speak not of stupid tempers) they will find, from time to time, that they make slips, in which trouble and emotion have some share; and which even then are useful to humble and reform them. And when such a humility is wrought, then the rage is all lost and utterly destroyed. Moreover they will find that there often rise in them certain motions of anger, but the sweet-

ness of grace holds them back by a secret violence: they would easily trangress, if in any wise they gave way to these motions: there are persons who think themselves very mild because nothing thwarts them: it is not of such that I am speaking; for the mildness, which has never been put to the proof, is often only a mask of mildness. Those persons who, when unmolested appear saints, are no sooner exercised by vexing occurrences, than there starts up in them a strange number of faults, which they had thought to be dead, and which only lay dormant because nothing awaked them.

I followed my religious exercises. I shut myself up all the day to read and to pray. I gave all I had to the poor, taking even linen to their houses to make them necessaries. I taught them the catechism; and, when my parents dined abroad, I made them eat with me, and served them with great respect. I read the works of *St. Francis de Sales and the life of Madame de Chantal. There I found that she made prayers. I begged of my confessor to teach me to make them; and as he did not, I tried to make them myself as well as I could; but without any success, as I then thought, because I could imagine nothing, and yet persuaded myself, that prayer could not be made without forming to one's self certain ideas and reasoning much. This difficulty gave

* St. Francis de Sales she several times mentions with great esteem, in this and in the Second Part; a summary of his life is inserted in the Appendix.

M. de Chantal was the eldest daughter of Francis de Sales. I find that her life was written in French, but I have not yet met with it. I also find her called Baroness of Chantal, and not much more about her, but that she was very much esteemed as a pious and devout lady.

me no small trouble, and that for a long time. I was nevertheless very assiduous therein, and prayed earnestly to God to give me the gift of prayer. All that I saw written in the life of M. de Chantal charmed me; and I was so much a child, that I thought I ought to do every thing that I saw in it. All the vows she had made I made also, as that of ever aiming at the highest perfection and of doing the will of God in every thing. I was not yet twelve years of age: nevertheless I took the discipline according to my strength.*

After this, I turned all my thoughts to become a nun, very often going to *the visitation*; for the love which I had for St. Francis de Sales did not permit me to think of any other community than this of which he was the founder. I frequently went to beg the nuns there to receive me into their convent. Often I stole out of my father's house to go thither, and repeatedly solicited them to consent to my admission. But though it was what they eagerly desired, even as a temporal advantage; yet they never durst let me enter their house, as they very much feared my father, whose fondness for me they were no strangers to. There was then at that house a niece of my father's, to whom I am under great obligations. Fortune had not been very favourable to her father, and had thereby reduced her in some sort to depend on mine, to whom she discovered my inclination; who, though he would not for any thing in the world have hindered a right vocation, yet could not hear of my design without shedding

* This discipline in the Romish church is for people to scourge themselves for their sins. This and many other grievous bodily austerities she afterwards voluntarily underwent, of which some notice will be taken in *the proper* place.

tears. But as he happened at this time to be abroad, my cousin went to my confessor, to desire him to forbid my going to *the visitation*. He durst not however do it plainly, for fear of drawing on himself the resentment of that community; for they already looked upon me as their's. Yet I still wanted to be a nun, and importuned my mother excessively to take me to that house; but she would not do it, for fear of grieving my father, who was yet absent, and she still referred me to his return. As I saw that I could not obtain from her what I desired, I counterfeited her hand writing, and forged a letter in which she besought those ladies to receive me; excusing herself from coming with me on account of her illness: but the prioress, who was a relation of my mother's, and well acquainted with her hand, at once detected the forgery.

[*The Translator here introduces the following Note.*]

Having published the three foregoing sheets, I have thereby had the opportunity of hearing opinions on them, generally in their favour, but not all. The preliminary observations, already made, are far short of satisfying some individuals. They seem to have a measure of their own, and little to regard purity of heart and life in others, if it does not tally with their own measure in every circumstantial article. I really think it far too unreasonable to demand and expect that in all countries, and under all disadvantages, every point shall exactly quadrate with their measure. Now the apostle Paul, as there were early in the Christian Church different sentiments, among the converted Jews and Gentiles, informed them that in Christ Jesus circumcision availed nothing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.* And such was M. Guion—*created anew in him unto good works*.† So the pious Judge Hale describes his sentiments of sincere practical christians from whom in profession he dissented. Concerning the ends, design, and effect of true christian religion he writes thus:

"It teaches and tutors the soul to a high reverence and veneration of Almighty God, a sincere and upright walking as in the presence

* Gal. vi. 15. † Eph. ii. 10.

of the invisible, all-seeing God. It makes a man truly to love, to honour, to obey Him; and therefore careful to know what His will is. It renders the heart highly thankful to Him both as his Creator, Redeemer and Benefactor.—He that fears the *Lord of Heaven and Earth*, —walks humbly before him—thankfully lays hold of the message of *redemption by Christ Jesus*—strives to express his thankfulness by the sincerity of his obedience—is sorry with all his soul when he comes short of his duty—walks watchfully in the denial of himself, and holds no confederacy with any lust or known sin: if he fall in the least measure, is restless till he hath made his peace by true repentance—is true to his promise—just in his actions—charitable to the poor—sincere in his devotions—that will not deliberately dishonour God, though with the greatest security of impunity—that hath *his hope in Heaven*, and *his conversation in Heaven*—that dares not do an unjust act, though ever so much to his advantage, and all this because he sees Him that is invisible, and fears Him because he loves Him; fears Him as well for His goodness as His greatness. Such a man, whether he be an episcopalian, or a presbyterian, or an independent, or an anabaptist, *he hath the life of religion* in him, and *that life acts in him*, and will conform his soul to the image of his Saviour, and walk along with him to eternity, notwithstanding his *practice* or *non-practice* of these *indifferents*."

What this honourable author has observed is the one essential object. I only add that, so far as any thing becomes a matter of conscience, so far it ceases to be indifferent. It is then an indispensable duty; and without the due observance of it, that *life*, which *is hid with Christ in God*, would be in danger of being lost.

But there is another thing under this head, which to me appears very material. I think M. Guion attained a greater constancy of subjection of her temper and passions to the spirit of Christ, in the whole conduct of her life, private as well as public, a greater love of poverty and sufferings for his sake, from thence more of tender charity and sympathy with the poor and distressed, more of humiliation in regard to her abilities, gifts and endowments, more of the mystery of preaching Christ in silence, as in the future part of her life will eminently appear,* more of conformity to him *who became of no reputation, humbling himself to the station and form of a servant*, more of every root of bitterness eradicated, more of every sour tincture of spiritual elevation expelled, than the principal of her objectors I have yet met with; to whom I think it would be of the highest benefit to press after these real excellencies.

* Part I. Chap. XIII, &c.

There is no room to doubt that M. Guion's soul was precious in the sight of her Redeemer. Shall any then, who think the same of themselves, find fault with her, because she, living in France, innocently retained some of the French manners; which probably proved the means of her doing more good, both among those of high rank and of low? Let them first patiently read her life to its final period, in a good mind, without prejudice: then, instead of endeavouring to prevent the reading, and spreading, the knowledge of the lives and labours of good men or women, of other nations, they may, in the charitable extension of divine unity, be ready to say, as it was said in a vision to an apostle, "Come over into Macedonia, (or into England) to help us; that an immovable constancy of dedication to God, like yours, may be diffused here also."*

* Acts xvi. 9.

CHAPTER V.

No sooner was my father returned home, than he fell into a violent distemper. My mother was at the same time indisposed in another part of the house. I was then all alone with him, ready to render him every kind of service I was capable of, and to give him all the dutiful marks of a most sincere affection: and I do not doubt but my assiduity was very agreeable to him. I went unperceived by him, to perform the most menial offices; taking the time for it when the servants were not at hand; as well to mortify myself as to pay due honour to what Jesus Christ said, that *he came not to be ministered to, but to minister*. When he made me read by him I read with such a heartfelt devotion that he was surprised at it. I remembered the instructions my sister had given me, and the ejaculatory prayers and praises I had learned from her. She had taught me to praise thee, oh my God, in all thy works. All that I saw called upon me to render thee that homage. If it rained, I wished all the drops of water to be changed into love and praises. My heart was nourished insensibly with thy love; and my spirit was incessantly engrossed with the remembrance of thee. I seemed to join and partake in all the good that was done in the world, and could have wished to have the united hearts of all men to love thee. This habit rooted itself so strongly in me, that I retained it through all my greatest inconstancies.

My cousin afore mentioned helped not a little to support me in these good sentiments: for I was often with

her, and loved her, as she took great care of me, and treated me with much gentleness. Her fortune being equal neither to her birth nor her virtue, she did with charity and affection what her condition obliged her to. My mother grew jealous, fearing I should love my cousin too well, and herself too little. She who had left me in my young years to the care of her maids, and since that to my own, only enquiring if I was in the house, and troubling herself no further, now demanded that I should always stay with her; and never suffered me to be with my cousin, but with very great reluctance. My cousin fell ill; she took that occasion to send her home, which was to me a very affecting stroke, both for nature and for grace.

Though my mother acted thus she was a very virtuous woman. But God permitted it for my exercise. She was one of the most charitable women of her age. She not only gave away the surplus, but even the necessaries of the house. Never were the needy neglected by her. Never any wretch came to her without succour. She furnished poor workmen wherewith to support their labour, and poor tradesmen wherewith to supply their shops. From her I think I inherited my charity and love for the poor: For God did me the favour to succeed her in that holy exercise. There was not one in the town or its environs, who did not praise her for this great virtue. She has sometimes given to the last pistole in the house; and yet so great was her economy that she did not sink or fail in her trust. Her faith was lively, and her devotion to the blessed virgin very great, never failing to say daily her office, (a part of the Popish breviary.) She wanted nothing but a director,

who might have drawn her into the inward exercise of religion; without which all virtues are but weak and languishing.

My mother's only care about me had been all along to have me in the house; which indeed is one material point for a girl. And this habit, of being so constantly kept within, proved of great service to me after my marriage; as I shall tell in its due course. It might have been much better for me had she kept me more in her own apartment, with an agreeable freedom; and enquired oftner what part of the house I was in.

After my cousin left me I continued for some time in those sentiments of piety I have mentioned. One favour which God granted me, was so great a readiness to forgive injuries that my confessor was surprised at it; as he knew that some young ladies had, out of envy, spoken very unhandsomely of me; and that I spoke well of them as occasion offered. I was seized with a tertian ague, which lasted four months, in which I suffered much; yet was favoured with piety during the time, and enabled to suffer with much resignation and patience. In this frame of mind and manner of life I persevered, so long as I continued the practice of prayer. But I am going to recite how I slid off from it, and lost my condition.

About eleven or twelve months after, we went to pass some days in the country. My father took along with us one of his near relations, who was a very accomplished young gentleman. He had a great desire to marry me; but my father, who had resolved not to give me to any near kinsman, on account of the difficulty of obtaining dispensations, put him off, without alledging any false or frivolous reasons for it.

As this young gentleman was very much devoted to the blessed virgin, and every day said her office, I said it with him; and to have time for it left off prayer, which was to me the first inlet of evils. Yet I kept up for a long time some share of the spirit of piety; for I went to seek out the little shepherdesses, to instruct and teach them their religious duties; yet this spirit gradually decayed, not being nourished by prayer. Hereby I became cold toward God: all my old faults revived; to which I added a prodigious vanity. The love I began to have for myself extinguished what remained in me of the love of God.

I did not immediately leave off prayer, without asking my confessor's leave; alledging that I thought it better to say the office of the virgin every day, than to practise prayer; as I had not time for both. This was a stratagem of the enemy to draw me from God, and to fasten me insensibly in the snares he was laying for me. My confessor was easy in the matter; not a man of prayer, he gave his consent, to my great hurt.

Oh my God, were but the value of prayer known, the great advantage which accrues to the soul from conversing with thee, and what consequence it is of to salvation, every one would be assiduous in it. It is a strong hold into which the enemy cannot enter. He may attack it, besiege it, make a noise about its walls; but while we are faithful, and do not quit it, he can do us no harm. It is alike requisite to dictate to children the necessity of prayer as of their salvation; but alas! unhappily, it is thought sufficient to tell them that there is a heaven and a hell; that they must endeavour to avoid the latter and attain the former; and yet they are not taught the shortest and

easiest way of arriving at it. The way to heaven is prayer; but a prayer of the heart, which every one is capable of, and not of reasonings which are the fruits of study, or exercise of the imagination, which, in filling the mind with wandering objects, rarely settle it; and instead of warming the heart with love to God, leave it cold and languishing. Oh poor people, ignorant and carnal minds, children without reason and knowledge; dull or hard hearts which can retain nothing, come to the practice of prayer, and ye will become wise. Oh ye men who are great, wise and rich, Have ye not, (great as ye are) a heart capable of loving what is proper for you, and of hating what is destructive? Love the sovereign good, hate the sovereign evil, and ye will be truly wise. When ye love any one, do ye know the reasons of love and its definitions? No, certainly; ye love because your heart is made to love what it thinks lovely. Is there any thing more lovely than God? Ye know that he has created you, and has died for you: but if these reasons are not sufficient, which of you has not some necessity, some trouble, or some disgrace? Which of you does not know how to tell his malady, and beg a remedy? Come then to this fountain of all good. Without complaining to weak and impotent creatures, who cannot help you, come to prayer; to lay before God your troubles, to beg his grace, and above all to love him. None can exempt himself from loving; for none can live without a heart, nor the heart without love.

Why should any amuse themselves, in seeking reasons for loving love itself? Let us love without reasoning about it; and we shall find ourselves filled with love, before the others have learned the reasons which

induce to it. Taste of love, and ye will be wiser in it than the most skilful philosophers. In love, as in every thing else, experience instructs better than reason. Oh then come to drink at this fountain of living waters, instead of the broken cisterns of the creature, which far from allaying your thirst, only tend to augment it, and to render you never satisfied. Did ye drink at this fountain, ye would not seek elsewhere for any thing to quench your thirst; for while ye still continue to draw from this well, ye would have no more thirst after the world: but if ye quit it, alas! the enemy has the ascendant; he will give you of his poisoned waters; which, in making you taste an apparent sweetness, will take from you your life.

This was what I did, when I left off prayer. I became as a *vineyard exposed to pillage*, whose hedges torn down give liberty to all the passengers to ravage it. I began to seek in the creature what I had found in God. Thou left me to myself, because I left thee first; and wast pleased, in permitting me to sink into the horrible pit, to make me feel the necessity I was in, of approaching to thee in prayer. Thou hast said, that *thou wilt destroy those adulterous souls who depart from thee.* Alas! their departure alone causes their destruction, since, in departing from thee, oh Sun of righteousness, they enter into the region of darkness and shadow of death, from whence they would never rise again, if thou didst not re-visit them; if thou didst not by thy divine light, come to illuminate their darkness, and by thy enlivening warmth, to melt their icy hearts, and restore them to life.

I fell then into the greatest of all misfortunes; for

I even wandered away from thee, oh my God, and thou gradually retired from a heart which quitted thee. Yet such is thy goodness, that it seems as if thou unwillingly left me; and when this heart wants to return to thee, thou comest to meet it as with the steps of a giant. This experience, which I have had, shall be to me an everlasting testimony of thy kindness and my ingratitude.

I became still more passionate than I had ever been, as age gave more force to my passions. I was frequently guilty of lying; I felt my heart corrupt and vain, no more piety left in my soul, but a state of indifference and indevotion; though I still kept up the outside appearance with a good deal of care; and the habit I was in of being at church with modesty, made me appear better than I was. Vanity, which had been excluded out of my heart, now resumed its seat there. I began to pass a good deal of my time before a looking-glass. I found so much pleasure in viewing myself therein, that I thought others were in the right who practised the same. Instead of making use of this exterior, which God had given me as a means of loving him the more, it became to me only the means of a vain complacency. All seemed to me to look beautiful in my person, but I saw not that it covered a polluted soul. This rendered me so vain, that I doubt whether any ever exceeded me therein.

The high esteem I had for myself made me find faults in every one else of my own sex. I had no eyes but to see my own good qualities, and to discover the defects of others. I hid from myself my own faults, or if I remarked any, yet to me they appeared little in comparison of others. I excused and even

figured them to myself as perfections. Every idea I had of others and of myself was false. I loved reading to excess, particularly romances; spending great part of the night as well as the day, therein. I was uneasy till I got to the end of them; and then had an insatiable desire of more of the like kind to read. These books are strange inventions to destroy youth: for if they caused no other hurt than the loss of precious time, is not that too much? I was not restrained, but rather encouraged to read them under this fallacious pretext, that thereby one learns to speak well. Mean while thy abundant goodness, oh my God, engaged thee to seek me again. I was touched with lively sorrow, and poured out floods of tears; afflicted for a condition so different from that which I had found in thy presence: but my tears were without effect, and my sorrows useless. I could not, of myself, get out of this unhappy condition. I wished some hand as charitable as powerful, would have extricated me out of it: but as for myself, I had not power to do it. I was (like the prophet) *in a deep abyss of mire*, which I could not get out of. I met with reprimands for being in it, but none kind enough to reach out a helping hand to free me from it: and when I tried vain efforts to get out, I only sunk the deeper. The fruitless essay made me see my own impotence, and only rendered me more afflicted and miserable.

Alas! how much compassion has this sad experience given me for sinners, as it has brought me to see how it happens, that so few of them emerge from the miserable state into which they are fallen; because such as see it only cry out against their disorders, and frighten them with threats of future punishment.

These cries and threats at first make some impression, and they make some weak efforts to amend: but, after having experienced their insufficiency, they gradually abate in their design; and lose their courage for trying any more. And all that men can say to them afterwards is but lost labour, though one preach to them incessantly. When any for relief run to confess, the only true remedy for them is prayer; to present themselves before God, in the condition of criminals; and to beg of him the power to come out of this state; they would then soon be changed, and brought *out of the mire and clay*. But the devil has falsely persuaded the doctors and the wise men of the age, that, in order to pray, it is necessary first to be perfectly converted. Hence people are dissuaded from it, and hence there is rarely any conversion that is durable. Our enemy is outrageous only against prayer, and those that exercise it; because he knows it is the true means of taking from him his prey. Let us undergo all the austerities we will, he suffers us to do it, and neither persecutes those that enjoin them, nor those that practise them. But no sooner does one enter into a spiritual life, a life of prayer, but such an one must resolve on strange crosses. All manner of persecutions and contempts in this world are reserved for that life.*

* We see in this paragraph that she was, at the time of writing it, enlightened in a good degree to discover the emptiness and deception of two of the articles imposed by the Church of Rome as duties, viz. the recourse to confessors for the cure of inward trouble, and the use of bodily austerities; instead of both these, she recommends the faithful application of the soul to him who is Omnipresent, and the only Physician of Value.

Miserable as the condition was to which I was reduced by my infidelities, and the little succour I had from my confessor, I did not fail to say my vocal prayers every day, to confess pretty often, and to communicate almost every fortnight. Sometimes I went to church to weep, and to pray to the blessed virgin to obtain my conversion. I loved to hear any speak of God, and was never fatigued with hearing them. When my father spoke of him, I was transported with joy; and when he and my mother went on any pilgrimage, and were to set off very early in the morning, either I did not go to bed, that I might not be surprized with sleep, or hired the girls to wake me timely. My father then was always speaking of God; which at such times afforded me the highest satisfaction, and such as I preferred to all others. I also loved the poor, and was charitable to them at this very time. How strange may this seem to some, and how hard to reconcile things so opposite!

[*Note by the Translator.*]

Having speedily passed over her childish years, chequered with the dangers incident to that age, in respect both of her person and her morals, her scene of life begins to appear more interesting.

Now blooming in youth, extolled for her beauty, admired by some, and envied by others, she becomes exposed (but for a short space) to the snares of the world, and of her own vanity co-operating with them.

Soon, ah soon! she finds herself stopt in her career, snatched in her bloom, and involved in the miseries of a matrimonial state, not of her own choice, but imposed on her by that of her parents.

We are now about entering a chapter, the perusal of which may even strike the obdurate and insensible with some feelings of compassion for her early and sudden change; no longer at liberty to range in life, and look around it, in order to make a choice of what might be agreeable to her; instead of that, chained down under

CHAPTER VI.

AFTERWARDS we came to Paris, where my vanity increased. No cost was spared to make me appear to advantage. I was forward enough to shew myself and expose my pride, in making a parade of this vain beauty, wishing to be loved of every one and to love none. Several men made offers of marriage, who appeared advantageous matches for me; but God, unwilling to have me lost, did not permit them to succeed. My father found difficulties, which my all-wise Creator caused to arise for my salvation; for had I married any of these persons, I should have been much exposed, and my vanity would have had the means of extending itself in a wider circle.

There was one person who had asked for me in order to marriage, for several years past, whom my father, for family reasons, had always refused. His manners were opposite to my vanity. Nevertheless a fear lest I should leave this country, and the affluent circumstances of this gentleman, induced my father, notwithstanding both his own and my mother's

teaseless oppressions, without hope of freedom, where every thing was perpetually dark, sour and grating.

Her troubles indeed, through the goodness of God to her, took the best turn, as they induced her to have recourse to him for his assistance to bear her hard lot; and to discharge every duty requisite in it: yet certainly cruel is the conduct of parents, who, from sordid views, force their children for life into what is so opposite to their peace. Though the Father of mercies often sanctifies troubles, yet he approves not our *doing evil that good may come of it*, or *committing sin that grace may abound*.

reluctance, to promise me to him; which was done without consulting me in the case. They made me sign the marriage articles without letting me know what they were; though I was well pleased with the thoughts of marriage, flattering myself with a hope of being thereby set at full liberty, and delivered from the rough treatment of my mother, which I drew upon myself by my want of docility: yet God ordered it far otherwise; and the condition which I found myself in afterwards, disappointed all my hopes; as I shall shew in the sequel.

How pleasing soever marriage was to my thoughts, I was all the time, after my being promised, and even long after my marriage, in extreme confusion, which arose from two causes: the first was my natural modesty, which I did not lose. I had much reserve towards men. The other was my vanity; for though the husband provided was a more advantageous match than I merited, yet I did not think him such: and the figure which the others made who had offered to me before, was vastly more engaging. Their rank would have placed me in view; and as I consulted, in these things, nothing but my vanity, whatever did not flatter that was to me insupportable; yet even this vanity was I think of some advantage to me; for it hindered me from falling into such things as cause the ruin of families. I would not do any thing which, in the eye of the world, might render me culpable; so strictly did I guard my exterior conduct. As I was modest at church, and had not been used to go abroad without my mother, and as the reputation of our house was great, I passed for virtuous.

I did not see my spouse elect (at Paris) till two or three days before our marriage. I caused masses to

be said all the time after my being contracted, to know the will of God; wishing to do it in this affair at least. Oh goodness of my God, to bear with me at this time, and to allow me to pray to thee, with as much boldness as if I had been one of thy friends, I who had rebelled against thee as thy greatest enemy.

The joy of our nuptials was universal through the town: amidst this general rejoicing there appeared none sad but myself. I could neither laugh as others did, nor even eat; so much was I depressed, though as yet I knew not the cause: but it was a foretaste which God gave me of what was to befal me. The remembrance of the desire I had of being a nun came pouring in upon me. All who came to compliment me, the day after, could not forbear rallying me, because I wept bitterly. I answered them. "Alas! I had desired so much to be a nun; why then am I now married? And by what fatality has such a revolution befallen me?" No sooner was I at the house of my new spouse, than I perceived that it would be for me *a house of mourning*.

I was obliged here to change my conduct; for their manner of living was very different from that in my father's house. My mother-in-law, who had long been a widow, regarded nothing else but saving; whereas at my father's house they lived in a manner extremely noble. All there was set off in full view; all appeared elegant; and what my husband and mother-in-law called pride, and I called politeness, was observed there. I was very much surprized at this change; so much the more, as my vanity wished to increase, rather than to be diminished.

At the time of my marriage I was a little past fifteen years of age. My surprize increased greatly, when I saw I must lose what I had acquired with so much application. At my father's house we were obliged to behave in a genteel way, and to speak with propriety. There all that I said was applauded. Here they never hearkened to me, but to contradict and find fault. If I spoke well, they said it was to give them a lesson: if any questions were started, whereas my father encouraged me to speak freely on such occasions, here if I told my sentiment, they said it was to enter into a dispute. They shamefully made me hold my tongue, and scolded me from morning till night.

I should have some difficulty to write you these things, which cannot be done without wounding charity, if you had not forbidden me to omit any one article, and if you had not positively enjoined me to lay open every thing, and to write down every particular. One thing further I request before you proceed, which is not to look at things on the side of the creature, which would make these persons appear worse than they were; for my mother-in-law had virtue, my husband had religion, and not any vice. It is requisite to look at every thing on the side of God, who permitted these things, only for my salvation, and because he would not have me lost. I had beside so much pride, that had any other conduct been held over me, I should have supported myself therein, and should perhaps not have turned myself on the side of God; as afterwards, by the oppression of a multitude of crosses, I was reduced to do.

To return to my subject, my mother-in-law conceived such an aversion to me, that, in order to vex me she made me do the most disagreeable things; for her humour was so extraordinary, having never surmounted it in her youth, that she could hardly live with any body. Saying no other than vocal prayers, she did not see this kind of fault; or seeing it and not drawing strength from the spirit of prayer, she could not get the better of it; and it was a subject of pity; for she had both sense and merit. I was then made the victim of her humours. All her occupation was to thwart me continually, and she inspired her son with the like sentiments. They would make persons far below me take place above me. My mother, who was very tenacious of the point of honour, could not endure this: and when she heard of it from others (for I told her nothing of it) she chid me, thinking I did it, not knowing how to keep my rank; and that I had no spirit; with many other things of that sort. I durst not tell her how it was with me; but I was almost ready to die with the agonies of grief and continual vexation. And what aggravated them all, was the remembrance of the persons who had offered suit to me, the difference of their humour and their manner of acting, the love they had for me, with their agreeableness and politeness. All this made my present situation very gloomy, and my burthen intolerable. My mother-in-law upbraided me in regard to my family, and spoke to me incessantly to the disadvantage of my father and mother. I never went to see them, without having some bitter speeches to bear at my return.

On the other hand my mother complained of me, that I did not come often enough to see her. She

said I did not love her, that I was alienated from my own family, by being too much attached to that of my husband; so that I had a great deal of heavy sufferings to undergo on both sides.

What still further augmented my crosses was, that my mother related to my mother-in-law, the pains I had cost her from my infancy: after which they reproached me, saying, *I was a changeling and an evil spirit.* My husband obliged me to stay all the day long in my mother-in-law's room, without any liberty of retiring into my own apartment, so that I had not a moment's respite to breathe a little. She was ever reflecting on me to every body, to lessen the affection and esteem which any had for me, galling me with the grossest affronts before the finest companies. This had not the effect she wanted; for the more patiently they saw me bear it, the higher esteem they entertained for me.

Indeed, she found the secret of extinguishing my vivacity, and making me become like a stupid idiot; so that some of my former acquaintance hardly knew me. Those who had not seen me before, said, "Is this the person famed for such an abundance of wit? She cannot say two words. She is a fine image." I was not sixteen years old. I was so much intimidated, that I durst not go out without my mother-in-law, and in her presence I could not speak. I knew not what I said; so much fear I had of putting her out of humour, and drawing some bitter speech on myself.

To compleat my affliction, they presented me with a waiting-maid who was every thing with them. She kept me in sight like a governess, and treated *me in* a strange manner. For the most part I bore

with patience a malady which I had no way to avoid: but sometimes I let some hasty answer escape me, which was to me a source of grievous crosses, and violent reproaches, for a long time together. When I went out the footman had orders to give an account of every thing I did. It was then I began to eat the bread of sorrow, and to mingle my drink with my tears. If I was at table, they did one thing or other to me which covered me with confusion. I had recourse to tears, and from thence had a double shame, the one for what they said to me, and the other for not being able to forbear weeping. I had nobody to tell my unhappiness to, who might share my grief, and help me to bear it. I had a mind to tell something of it to my mother; and that caused me so many new crosses, that I resolved to have no other confident of my troubles than myself. It was not from any natural cruelty that my husband treated me thus; for he loved me passionately, but he was naturally warm and hasty. What my mother-in-law said to him continually irritated him.

It was in a condition so deplorable every way, oh my God, that I began to perceive the need I had of thy assistance: for this condition was so much the more perilous for me, because, meeting with none but admirers abroad, and such as flattered me to my hurt, it was to be feared lest in such tender years, amidst all the strange domestic crosses I had to bear, I should be seduced into irregularity. But thou, by thy goodness and the love thou bore me, gave it quite a different turn. By these redoubled strokes thou drew me to thyself, and did by thy crosses what thy caresses could not effect. Nay even at the beginning of my marriage thou made use of my natural pride,

to keep me within the limits of my duty. I knew that a woman ought never to give the least suspicion to her husband, and I was so very guarded in that respect, that I often carried it even to excess, so far as to refuse my hand to such as offered me theirs. There happened to me an adventure which through my having a mind to drive prudence too far, had like to have ruined me; for things were taken contrary to their intent: but at that time my husband was sensible of my innocence, and of the falsehood of the insinuations which my mother-in-law wished to infuse into him.

Such powerful crosses, I say, made me return to God. I began to deplore the sins of my youth; for since my marriage I had not committed any voluntarily: yet I had still some sentiments of vanity remaining, which I wished not to have. However my troubles now counterbalanced them. Moreover many of them appeared just, to the little light I had; for I was not yet illuminated to discern the essence of vanity: I fixed my thoughts only on its accidents. I tried then to repair my life by penance, and by a general confession, the most exact that I had ever yet made. I quitted all my romances, for which I lately had such a fondness. It had been, some time before my marriage, damped by reading the Gospel, I was so affected therewith, and in it discovered that character of truth which put me out of conceit with all the other books. They appeared then to me to be only full of lies. I put away even indifferent books, to have none but such as were profitable. I resumed the practice of prayer, and endeavoured, oh my God, to offend thee no more. I felt thy love gradually to recover the ascendancy in my heart, and to banish eve-

ry other. I had notwithstanding, an excessive vanity, and complacency in myself, which has been my most grievous and obstinate sin.

My crosses redoubled every day. What rendered them more painful was, that my mother-in-law, not content with the bitterest speeches, which she uttered against me, both in public and private, would break out in a passion about the smallest trifles, and scarcely be free from it, even for a fortnight together. I passed a part of my time in bewailing myself, when I could be alone; and my grief became every day more bitter. I sometimes could not contain myself, when I saw girls, who were my domestics, and owed me submission, treat me so ill. I did nevertheless what I could to subdue my temper, which has cost me not a little.

Such heavy blows so impaired the vivacity of my nature, that I became *like a lamb that is shearing*. I prayed to the Lord to assist me, and he was my refuge. As my age differed from theirs (for my husband was twenty-two years older than myself) I saw well that there was no probability of changing their humours, which were fortified with years: as I found that whatever I said was offensive, even things which others would have been pleased with, I knew not what to do. One day, weighed down with grief, about six months after I was married, being alone, I took a knife to cut out my tongue, in order not to be obliged to speak to persons, who only made me speak, to have fresh matter of rage against me. This extravagant operation I had effected, if God had not stopped me short, and made me see my folly. I prayed continually, I even communicated, I caused masses to be said, to obtain the privilege of becoming dumb, so simple

and ignorant was I. I have had my share of crosses, but never found any so difficult to support, as that of perpetual contrariety, without relaxation; of doing all one can to please, without ever succeeding therein, but even still offending by the very means designed to oblige, and being forced to be with such, in a most severe confinement, from morning till night, without ever daring to leave them. I have found that great crosses overwhelm, and stifle all anger at once. But such a continual contrariety irritates and revives a sourness at the heart. It has such a strange effect, that one must do one's self the utmost violence, not to break out into rage and vexation.

Such was my condition in marriage, rather that of a slave than of a free person. For a new augmentation of my troubles, I perceived, four months after my marriage, that my husband was subject to the gout. This caused me many crosses, both within and without. He had the gout twice this year, six weeks at each time. Soon after it returned again; and he had it still worse than before. He was so much afflicted with it, that he did not leave his room, nor even his bed, which he usually kept for several months. I attended him with great care, though so very young. I did not fail in my duty, but even did it to the utmost of my power. But alas! all this did not gain me their friendship. I had not even the consolation to know whether what I did was agreeable. I denied myself all the most innocent diversions, to continue with my husband; and did whatever I thought would please him. Sometimes he suffered me quietly, and then I thought myself very happy: but at other times I was insupportable. My particular friends said, "I was of a fine age indeed to be nurse to an invalid,

and that it was a shameful thing that I did not set more value on my talents." I answered them, "since I had a husband, I ought to share his painful as well as his pleasing circumstances." Besides, my mother, instead of pitying me, reprimanded me sharply for my assiduity about my husband; assuring me that I should render myself unhappy by it; and that he would afterwards demand, as a duty, what I now did out of virtue. But, oh my God, how different were thy thoughts from theirs, what appeared *without* from what passed *within!* My husband had that foible, that when any one said any thing to him against me, he flew into a passion at once. It was the conduct of Providence over me: for he was a man of reason and loved me much. When I was sick, he was inconsolable. I believe, had it not been for my mother-in-law, and the girl I have spoken of, I should have been very happy with him: for most men have their passions; and it is the duty of a reasonable woman to bear them peaceably, without irritating them more by cross replies.

These things thou hast ordered, oh my God, in such a manner in thy goodness, that I have since seen, it was necessary for making me die to my vain and haughty nature. I should not have had power to destroy it myself, if thou hadst not laboured for it by an all-wise œconomy of thy Providence. I begged patience with great earnestness; nevertheless some sallies of my natural liveliness escaped me, and vanquished the resolutions I had taken of being silent. This was doubtless permitted, that my self-love should not nourish itself with my patience: for a slip of a moment caused me months of humiliation, reproach and sorrow, and proved the occasion of new crosses.

CHAPTER VII.

THIS first year I did not make a right use of my afflictions in such a manner as I should have done. I still had vanity. I sometimes lied, to excuse things to my husband and mother-in-law, because I strangely stood in awe of them. Sometimes I broke out in a rage, their conduct appeared so very unreasonable, and especially that most provoking treatment of the girl who served me. It appeared to me a thing unheard of, that they should take her part against me, however base and offensive her deportment. For as to my mother-in-law, her age and rank rendered the thing more tolerable in her. But thou, oh my God, brought me to see things in far other lights. I found in thee reasons for suffering, which I had never found in the creature; thou caused me to reap a benefit from it, of which I had yet no prospect. I came afterward to see in a clear light and with great joy, that this conduct, as unreasonable as it seemed, and as mortifying as it was, was quite necessary for me; for if I had been applauded by my husband and mother-in-law, as I was at my father's, my pride would have been intolerable. I had a fault common to many women, that I could not hear a beautiful woman praised, without finding some fault with her, artfully causing it to be remarked, in order to lessen the good which was said of her. This fault of mine continued long. It is the fruit of a gross and malignant pride, as well as that of extravagantly extolling any one.

About this time I gave birth to my first child, which was a son. My vanity still continued. I was glad of being noticed with regard. And, far from avoiding the occasions thereof, I went to the public walks, though but seldom; and when in the streets, I pulled off my mask out of vanity, and drew off my gloves to shew my hands. Could there be greater folly? I sometimes also went to the ball, where I exposed my vanity in dancing.

There fell out in the family an affair of great consequence in regard to our temporal concerns. The loss was very considerable. It cost me strange crosses for above a year, not that I regretted the losses which it caused. But I seemed to be the butt of all the ill humours of the family. It would require a volume to describe all that I suffered during this time. With what pleasure did I sacrifice these temporals; and how often resign myself to have begged my bread, if God had so ordered it! My mother-in-law was inconsolable. She bade me pray to God for these things; but to me that was entirely impossible. Oh my dearest Lord! never could I pray to thee about the world, or things of the world; never sully my sacred addresses to the Majesty on high with the dirt of the earth: No, I rather wished to renounce it all, and every thing else, for the sake of thy precious love, and the enjoyment of thy presence in that kingdom, which is not of this world. I wholly sacrificed myself to thee, even earnestly begging thee rather to reduce our family to want, than suffer it to offend thee. In my own mind I excused my mother-in-law, saying to myself, "If thou hadst taken the pains to accumulate and save like her, thou wouldst not be so indifferent at seeing so much lost. Thou enjoyest what

cost thee nothing, and reapest what thou hast not sown." Yet all these thoughts could not make me sensible to our losses. I even formed agreeable ideas of our going to the hospital. No state appeared to me so poor and miserable, which I should not have thought easy in comparison of the continual domestic persecutions I underwent. My father who loved me tenderly and whom I honoured beyond expression, knew nothing of it. God so permitted it, that I should have him also displeased with me for some time: for my mother was continually telling him that I was an ungrateful creature, shewing no regard for them, but all for my husband's family. Appearances were against me; for I did not go to see them a quarter as often as I should have done. But they knew not the captivity I was in; and what I was obliged to bear for defending them. These complaints of my mother, and a trivial affair that fell out, changed a little my father's fond regard for me; but it did not hold long. My mother-in-law reproached me, saying, "No afflictions befel them till I came into the house. All misfortunes came along with me." On the other side my mother wanted me to exclaim against my husband which I could never submit to.

No body can write such things with more reluctance than I do; and I confess that if I did not fear to disobey you, I should be unwilling to prosecute any further my narration.

We continued to meet with loss after loss, the King retrenching a considerable share of our revenues, beside great sums of money left in our city house at Paris. I could have no rest or peace in the midst of such great afflictions. I had no mortal either to console me or to advise with. My sister, who had edu-

cated me, had departed this life. She died two months before my marriage, and I had no confidence in any other.

I now curled my hair not at all, or very little; very rarely did I look at myself in a glass, that I might not gratify my vanity. I had for the exercise of reading, books of devotion, such as Thomas a Kempis, on the imitation of Jesus Christ, and the works of St. Francis de Sales, which I read while the maid was combing me. Moreover I let myself be drest just as she pleased, which abridges a great deal of trouble and of the subjects of vanity. How often have I gone to church not so much to worship God as to be seen there? Other women, jealous of me, insisted upon it that I painted; and told my confessor of it, who chid me for it; but I assured him to the contrary. I often spoke in my own praise, and sought to raise my own esteem by depreciating others: yet these faults gradually decreased; for I was very sorry afterwards for having committed them. I often examined myself very strictly, writing down my faults and slips from week to week, and month to month, to see how much I was improved or reformed. But alas! this labour, though fatiguing, was but of little service, because I placed most of my trust in my own cares. The church was the place in which I was most seen, and most tempted with sentiments of vanity.

My husband's absence was so long, and in the mean time my crosses and vexations at home so great, that I determined to go to him. My mother-in-law strongly opposed it; but this once my father interfering, and insisting on it, she let me go. At my arrival I found he had been dangerously ill. Through vexation and dissappointment he was very much

changed; for he could not finish his affairs, having no liberty to attend to them, keeping himself concealed at the hotel de Longueville, where Madam de Longueville was extremely kind to me. But as I appeared very much to view, he was in great fear lest I should make him known: in a rage he bade me return home; but love, and my long absence from him surmounting every other consideration, he soon relented and made me stay with him. He kept me eight days without permitting me to stir out of his chamber; 'till, fearing the effect of such a close confinement on my constitution, he desired me to go and take a walk in the garden, where I met Madam de Longueville who testified great joy at seeing me.

I cannot express all the kindness I met with in this house. All the officers here served me with emulation, and applauded me on account of my poor miserable person and exterior deportment; yet I was much on my guard against paying too great attention thereto. I never entered into discourse with any man when alone. I admitted none into my coach, not even of my relations, unless my husband were in it: neither did I enter into any man's coach. In short there was not any rule of discretion, which I did not duly observe to avoid giving any suspicion to my husband, or subject of calumny to others. So much precaution had I for a vain point of honour, and so little for the true honour, which is to please God. Every one studied here how to contribute to divert or oblige me. The appearance of things without was too enchanting for me; but it was far otherwise within; chagrin had so much overcome and ruffled my husband, that I had hard things daily and often in the day to digest. Sometimes he threatened

to throw the supper out of the windows: but I said to him, "he would then do me an injury, as I had a keen appetite." I made him laugh, and laughed with him. This appeased him; and the manner in which I spoke diverted him. Before that, melancholy prevailed over all I could do, and over the love he had for me. But God both armed me with patience, and gave me grace to return him no disobliging answer; so that the enemy, who attempted to draw me into some offence, was forced to retire in confusion through the signal assistance of that grace.

After this I fell sick. As I would not incommode the hotel de Longueville, I got myself removed to another place, where I was reduced to such extremity, that after having in seven days taken from me forty-eight cups of blood, till they could get no more, the doctors gave me over. There was not the least likelihood of my recovery. The priest, who confessed me, being a person of piety and discernment, having been an intimate friend of St. Francis de Sales, appeared well satisfied on my behalf, and said, I should die like a saint. But my sins were too present to my mind, and too painful to my heart, to to have such a presumption. At midnight they brought me the holy *viaticum*.* It was a scene of general distress in the family, and among all that knew me. There was none but myself to whom death was indifferent. I beheld it without fear, and was rendered insensible to its approach. Far otherwise was it with my husband, who was inconsolable,

* The eucharist, or communion of bread and wine, given to persons in the pangs of death, pretended to strengthen the soul for its passage to the other World.

and like to die of grief, when he saw there was no more hope, no more blood in my veins: yet miraculously I recovered; and to me this malady proved of great benefit: for, beside a very great patience under violent pains, it served to illuminate me much in my view of the emptiness of worldly things; it detached me from myself, and gave me new courage to suffer more patiently than I had before done. The love of God gathered strength in my heart, with a desire to please and be faithful to him. Several other advantages I reaped from it, of which it would be useless to go through the whole detail. I had yet six months to drag along with a slow fever and hepatic flux. It was thought that would have brought me to my end. But thy time, oh my God, was not yet arrived for taking me to thyself. Thy designs over me were widely different from the expectations of those about me; it being thy determination to make me both the object of thy mercy and the victim of thy justice.

The Translator here introduces a long Note on the "Gross abuse of language among the Papists," &c. as applied to the power which the Priests are supposed to possess of *forgiving sins*; and that these men can *consecrate*, or place a holiness in *ground*, *buildings*, *garments*, *wafers*, *water*, &c.—Also, as applied, by them, to *Bishops*, *Saints*, *Holydays*, *Sacraments*, and in a great variety of other instances. After what has been said in the Preliminary Observations, it is thought unnecessary here to copy these remarks; especially as the subject has, of late years, been so often and so ably handled.—The two following paragraphs only, are retained:

"The language of the New Testament singly and entirely tends to the sanctification of the soul and unspotted goodness of life: but Popish priestcraft has most artfully adulterated the christian language to serve the purposes of superstition, to lead away the people from truth into error, into wrong ideas about matters of moment, in order to

CHAPTER VIII.

AFTER a long languishing time I recovered; about which time my dear mother departed this life, in great tranquility of mind; having, beside other virtues, been in particular very charitable to the poor. This virtue, so acceptable to God, he was graciously pleased to begin to reward, even in this life, with such a spirit of resignation, that though she was but twenty-four hours sick, she was made perfectly easy about every thing that was near and dear to her in this world. I now applied myself to my duties, never failing to practise that of prayer twice a day. I watched over myself, to subdue myself continually. I went to visit the poor in their houses, and assisted them in their maladies; and did (according to my understanding) all the good I knew. Thou, oh my God, increased both my love and my patience, in proportion to my sufferings. I had no regret for the temporal advantages which my mother had procured to my brother above me; yet at home

hold them thereby more dependent on themselves, and to beat them with violence in support of their errors."——

"And yet in that very church it hath pleased God, as it were miraculously, to raise up some as *burning and shining lights*, whose steps in life are well worthy to be traced, who did not join in persecuting any, but were meek, patient and persecuted. They indeed used the current words of their native countries, in their corrupted meanings, but without seeing them as such, the means of such sight being withheld from them. I have often been sorry, with many more, that the reformation from Popery in England has retained too many of the Popish words and ways, instead of coming clear out of them, like Israel out of Egypt, *not leaving a hoof behind.* EXOD. x. 26."

they treated me ill about that as about every thing else. I did not indeed serve thee yet with that fervour which thou wast pleased to give me soon after: for I would have been glad to reconcile thy love with the love of myself and of the creatures; unhappily, still finding some who loved me, and whom I could not forbear wishing to please; not that I loved them, but for the love I bore to myself.

A Lady, who was an exile, came to my father's house. He offered her an apartment in it which she accepted, and staid there a long time. She was one of great piety and inwardness. She had a singular kindness for me, because she saw that I had a desire to love God, and that I employed myself in the exterior works of charity. She remarked that I had the virtues of an active and bustling life; but that it was not in the simplicity of prayer she was in. She sometimes dropped a word to me on that subject: but as my time was not yet come, I did not understand her. She served me more by her example than her words. I observed on her countenance something which marked a great enjoyment of the presence of God. I tried, by the force of head and of thoughts, to gain it to myself; but with much trouble to little purpose. I wanted to have by efforts what I could not acquire but in ceasing from efforts.

My father's nephew, of whom I have made mention before, was returned from Cochinchina, to carry over some priests from Europe. Exceedingly glad I was to see him, well remembering what good his first passing by had done me. The Lady above mentioned was no less glad than myself; and they conversed together in a spiritual language. The virtue of this excellent relation charmed me; and I admired his

continual prayer without being able to comprehend it. I endeavoured to meditate and to think on God without intermission, to utter prayers and ejaculations, but could not acquire by all my toil, what God gave me himself, and which is experienced only in simplicity. My cousin did all he could to attach me more strongly to God. He conceived a vast affection for me. The purity he observed in me from the corruptions of the age, the abhorrence of sin at a time of life when others are beginning to relish the pleasures of it, (for I was not yet eighteen years old) gave him a tenderness for me. I complained to him of my faults ingenuously; for I had been sufficiently illuminated in regard to them; but, as the difficulty of entirely reforming myself much abated my courage, he cheered and exhorted me to support myself, and to persevere in my good endeavours for it.

I believe his prayers were more effectual than his words; for no sooner was he gone out of my father's house, than thou, oh my divine Love! manifested thy signal regard to me. The desire I had to please thee, the tears I shed, the manifold pains I underwent, the labours I sustained, and the little fruit I reaped from them, moved thee with compassion. Thou gave me in a moment, by thy grace, what I could not procure for myself by all my efforts. Such was the condition of my soul, when by a goodness so much the greater, as I had rendered myself the more unworthy of it, thou sent the favourable breath of thy divine operative Power to make me steer with full sails over the sea of afflictions. I had often spoken to my confessor about the great anxiety it gave me to find I could not meditate, in order to pray, nor imagine to myself any thing profitable to the purpose.

Subjects of prayer which were too extensive, to me were useless. Such as were short and pithy suited me better; but my confessor, I found, did not comprehend the matter, or understand my meaning.

At length God permitted a religious person, very devout, of the order St. Francis,* to pass by my father's habitation. He had designed going another way, that was shorter and more commodious; but a secret power made him change his design. He saw at first that there was something for him to do, and thought that God had called him for the conversion of a man of some distinction in that country; but his labours there proved fruitless. It was the conquest of my soul which was designed. As soon as he arrived in our neighbourhood, he came to see my father, who was very glad of his coming. At this time I was confined by the birth of my second son; my father was sick and like to die. For some time they prudently concealed it from me, till some person more indiscreet told me it. Instantly I arose, all weak as I was, and went to see him at the hazard of my life; and a dangerous illness it cost me. My father was recovered, but not entirely; yet enough to give me new marks of his affection. I told him of the strong desire I had to love God, and my great sorrow for not being able to do it fully. My father, as he had a great fondness for me, thought he could

* St. Francis of Assise, in Italy, first a merchant, became afterward a patriarch and founder of the order which bears his name, *viz.* the Order of Franciscan Friars, in 1206, approved by Pope Innocent III. in 1223. It has since branched into several others as Minims, Recolets, Capuchins, &c. So that there is now said to be an infinite number of these *Fratres minores*, as they call them in France, Spain, and other popish countries. The founder died in 1226, aged 46.

not give me a more solid indication thereof, than in procuring me an acquaintance with this worthy man. He told me what he knew of him, and urged me to go to see him.

I made at first a difficulty of doing it, being intent on observing the rules of the strictest prudence. However my father's repeated instances had with me the place of a positive command. I thought I could not do amiss, in a thing which I only did in obedience to him. I therefore took a kinswoman along with me and went. At first he seemed a little confused; for he was reserved toward women. Being newly come out of a five years' solitude, he was surprized that I was the first to address him. He spoke not a word for some time. I knew not what to attribute his silence to. I did not hesitate to speak to him, and to tell him in a few words my difficulties about prayer. He presently replied, "It is, Madam, because you seek without what you have within. Accustom yourself to seek God in your heart, and you will find him."

Having said these words, he left me. They were to me like the stroke of a dart, which pierced my heart asunder. I felt at this instant a wound very deep, smitten with the love of God; a wound so delightful that I desired it never to be cured. These words brought into my heart what I had been seeking so many years; or rather they made me discover what was there, and which I did not enjoy for want of knowing it. Oh my Lord! Thou wast in my heart, and demanded only the turning of my mind inward, to make me feel thy presence. Oh infinite Goodness! Thou wast so near, and I ran hither and thither seeking thee, and yet

found thee not. My life was a burden to me, and my happiness was within myself. I was poor in the midst of riches, and ready to perish with hunger, near a table plentifully spread, and a continual feast. Oh Beauty, antient and new! Why have I known thee so late! Alas! I sought thee where thou wast not, and did not seek thee where thou wast. It was for want of understanding these words of thy gospel, "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation, neither shall they say, Lo here, or lo there: for behold the kingdom of God is within you." This I now experienced, since thou became my King, and my heart thy kingdom, where thou reigned as Sovereign, and did all thy Will. This fell out on Magdalen's Day, 1668.

I told this good man, "that I did not know what he had done to me, that my heart was quite changed, that God was there; for from that moment he had given me an experience of his presence in my soul; not by thought or any application of mind, but as a thing really possessed after the sweetest manner." I experienced those words in the Canticles: "Thy Name is as precious ointment poured forth; therefore do the virgins love thee." For I felt in my soul an unction which, as a salutary perfume, healed in a moment all my wounds. I slept not all that night, because thy love, oh my God! flowed in me like delicious oil; and burned as a fire which was going to devour all that was left of *self* in an instant. I was all on a sudden so altered that I was hardly to be known either by myself or others. I found no more those troublesome faults or reluctances. They all disappeared, as being consumed, like chaff in a great fire.

I now became desirous that the instrument hereof might become my director, preferable to any other. This good father, however, could not readily resolve to charge himself with my conduct, though he saw so surprizing a change effected by the hand of God. Several reasons induced him to excuse himself; first my person, then my youth, for I was only nineteen years of age; and lastly, a promise he had made to God, from a distrust of himself, never to take upon himself the direction of any of our sex, unless God, by some particular providence, should charge him therewith. Upon my earnest and repeated request to him to become my director, he said he would pray to God thereupon, and bade me do so too. As he was at prayer it was said to him, "Fear not that charge; she is my spouse." This, when I heard it, affected me greatly. "What, (said I to myself) a frightful monster of iniquity, who have done so much to offend my God, in abusing his favours, and requiting them with ingratitude; and now thus to be declared his spouse!" After this he consented to my request.

Nothing was more easy to me now than to practise prayer. Hours passed away like moments, while I could hardly do any thing else but pray. The fervency of my love allowed me no intermission. It was a prayer of rejoicing and of possession; wherein the taste of God was so great, so pure, unblended and uninterrupted, that it drew and absorbed the powers of the soul into a profound recollection, without act or discourse. For I had now no sight but of Jesus Christ alone. All else was excluded, in order to love with the greater extent, without any selfish motives or reasons for loving.

CHAPTER IX.

SUCH was the prayer that was given me at once, which is far above ecstasies, ravishments and visions. All these gifts are more subject to the illusion or transformation of the adversary.

It is of such that St. Paul speaks, when he says, That *Satan transforms himself into an angel of light.* 2. Cor. 11. 18. which is generally the case with such as are fond of visions, and lay a stress on them; because they are apt to convey a vanity to the soul, or at least to hinder it from humbly attending on God alone.

Ecstacies arise from a sensible relish, and may be termed a spiritual sensuality, wherein the soul letting itself go too far, by reason of the sweetness it finds in them, falls imperceptibly into a state of decay. The crafty enemy presents such kinds of interior elevations and raptures, for baits to betray the soul; to render it sensual, to fill it with vanity and self-love, to fix its esteem and attention on the gifts of God, and to hinder it from following Jesus Christ in the way of renunciation, and of death to all things but him only.

But the immediate Word of God never deceives. It is incapable of any error. It is Jesus Christ himself, the word which is never one moment mute or unfruitful; it never ceases in the centre of the soul, when disposed for the hearing of it. It is efficacious in that soul in which it is received, and in communicating itself through that to other souls, to make them

fruitful to eternal life; Christ himself becoming the life of such souls.

Far different from a false assurance or frivolous dependance on a deceitful revelation of things to come, is *the Revelation of Jesus Christ*, Gal. 1. 16. mentioned by St. Paul. It is manifested to the soul when the eternal Word is communicated to it. It makes us *new creatures, created anew in Him.* This revelation is always true, and what the adversary of man cannot counterfeit. From hence proceeds the only safe ecstasy or ravishment, which is operated only by naked faith, and by dying even to the gifts of God, how sublime and excellent soever they may appear; because as long as the soul continues resting in them, it does not fully renounce itself, and so never passing into God, loses the real enjoyment of the Giver, which is indeed an inestimable loss.

Lest I should let my mind go after these gifts, and steal myself from thy love, oh my God, thou wast pleased to fix me in a continual adherence to thyself alone. Souls thus directed get the shortest way. They are to expect great sufferings, especially if they are mighty in faith, in mortification and deadness to all but God alone. A pure and disinterested love, an intenseness of mind for the advancement of thy interest, and of nothing else, these were the dispositions thou then implanted in me, and even a fervent desire of suffering for thee. The cross which I had hitherto borne only with resignation was now become my delight, and the special object of my rejoicing.

CHAPTER X.

I WROTE an account of my wonderful change in point of happiness to that good father who had been made the instrument of it. It filled him both with joy and astonishment. Oh my God, what penances did the love of sufferings cause me to undergo! I practised all the austerities I could imagine: but they were all too weak to satisfy the desire I had for suffering. Though my body was very delicate, the instruments of penance tore it without giving me pain enough as I thought.* I dressed grievous sores and wounds, and gave remedies to the sick. At my first engaging in this employ, my very heart would rise within me; and it was with the greatest difficulty I was able to bear it. But as soon as my

* M. Guion here enters into a detail of the voluntary austerities which she inflicted on her body, which shew the strength of her zeal, according to the light in which she then saw things, both for the punishment of sins committed in that body, and to prepare it for all manner of hardships and suffering she might meet with, in confessing Christ before men, from whom cruel persecution was to be expected; as the kingdom of Satan was so extensively prevalent.

She adds, "For several years I practised these first austerities: but as to these things in less than one year my senses were subjected. Nothing so soon subdues them as to refuse them whatever they desire, and to give them what they dislike. The rest does not make us die to our own wills so much: and austerities, how great soever they be, if they are not accompanied with what I have just said, always leave the senses in vigour, and never mortify them. But this, joined with inward attention to God, entirely takes away their life." Hereby she effectually conquered her delicacy, and through resolution and steadiness gradually brought herself to be naturalized to such things as had before appeared to her exceedingly loathsome.

aversion ceased, and my heart could as well bear the most grievous as the most agreeable things, this engagement was removed from me, to make way for others: for I did nothing of myself, but left myself to be wholly governed by my sovereign in all things.

When that good father asked me how I loved God, I answered, "Far more than the most passionate lover his beloved; and that even this comparison was improper, since the love of the creatures never can attain to this either in strength or in depth." This love of God occupied my heart so constantly and so strongly, that I could think of nothing else, as indeed I judged nothing else worthy of my thoughts.

The good father above mentioned was an excellent preacher. He was desired to preach in the parish to which I belonged, called Magdalen's. When I came, I was so strongly absorbed in God, that I could neither open my eyes, nor hear any thing that he said. I found that thy word, oh my God, made its own impression on my heart, and there had its effect, without the mediation of words, or any attention to them. And I have found it so ever since, though after a different manner, according to the different degrees and conditions I have passed through. So deeply was I settled in the inward spirit of prayer, that I could scarce any more pronounce the vocal prayers.

This immersion in God immerged all things. I could no more see the saints, or even the Blessed Virgin, out of God; but I beheld them all in him. And though I tenderly loved certain saints, as * St.

* The three first mentioned Saints are scriptural. An account of the fourth will be given in the appendix.

Peter, St. Paul, St. Mary Magdalen, St. Teresa, with all those who were spiritual, yet I could not form to myself images of them, nor invoke any of them out of God.

A few weeks after I had received that interior wound of the heart, which had begun my change, was held the feast of Notre Dame (or the blessed virgin) in the convent in which was that good father my director. I went in the morning to get the indulgences; and was much surprized when I came there and saw that I could not stir about them; though I stayed above five hours in the church. I was penetrated with so lively a feeling of pure love, that I could not resolve to abridge by indulgences the pains due to my sins. I said to thee, "Oh my love! I am willing to suffer for thee. I find no other pleasure but in suffering for thee. Indulgences may be good for those who know not the value of sufferings, who chuse not that thy divine justice should be satisfied; who, having mercenary souls, are not so much afraid of displeasing thee, as of the pains annexed to sin." Yet fearing I might be mistaken, and commit a fault in not getting the indulgences, for I had never heard of any one being in such a way before, I returned again to try to get them, but in vain; so not knowing what to do, I resigned myself herein to our Lord; and, when returned home, wrote to that good father an account of my disposition and sentiments, in such a manner, that, preaching that day, he made what I had written a part of his sermon, therein reciting it verbatim as I had written it.

I now quitted all companies, bade farewel for ever to plays and diversions, dancing, unprofitable walks and parties of pleasure. For two years I had left off

the curling of my hair, and yet I looked very well, and it was what my husband approved. My only pleasure now was to steal some moments of the day to be alone with thee; oh thou, who art my only love! All other pleasure was a pain to me. I lost not thy presence, which was given me by a continual infusion; not as I had imagined, by the effort of the head, or force of thought in meditating on God, but in the bottom of the will, where I tasted with unutterable sweetness the enjoyment of the beloved object, yet not, as I came to do afterwards, by an essential union, but by a *real union in the will*, which brought me to discern, in a happy experience, that the soul was created to enjoy its God.

This union is the most perfect of all those which are operated in the powers.* Its effect is much greater; for though the unions of the other powers enlighten the mind and absorb the memory; yet, if they are not accompanied with that of the will, they are of little use, as they produce only transient effects. The union of the will subjects the soul to God, conforms it to all his mind, causes self-will gradually to die, and lastly drawing with it the other powers, by means of the charity with which it is filled, it causes them gradually to be reunited in the centre, and to become lost therein, as to their own nature and operations.

This loss may be called the *annihilation of the powers*, as they are hereby annihilated, in regard to us, though in themselves they still subsist. It is in

* The three powers of the soul which she here mentions seem to be, 1st. The imagination here brought last, including the inward openings above mentioned. 2d. The understanding. 3d. The will, including the affections and passions.

proportion as charity fills and inflames, that it becomes so strong, as by degrees to surmount all the activity of the will of man, in order to subject it to that of God, in such manner that when the soul is docile, to leave itself to be purified, and emptied of all that which it has of its own, opposite to the will of God, it finds itself by little and little detached from every motion of its own, and placed in a holy indifference for willing; wishing nothing but what God does and wills. This never can be attained by the activity of our will, even though it were employed in continual devotions; because these, though very virtuous, are so far selfish actions, and cause the will still to subsist in itself in a multiplicity, in a dissimulation, or resemblance, of that of God. But when the will of the creature thoroughly submits to that of the Creator, leaving itself to be totally destroyed by the operation of charity, this consummates it in that of God, purifying it, before it acts, from all restriction, resemblance and selfishness.

The case is the same with the other two powers, whereinto, by means of charity the two other theological virtues are introduced. Faith so strongly seizes on *the understanding*, as to make it decline all reasonings, all particular brightnesses and illustrations were they ever so sublime; which sufficiently demonstrates how far visions, revelations, ecstasies, &c. differ from this, and hinder the soul from being lost in God; though by them it appears lost in him for some short seasons: but it is not a true loss; since the soul which is entirely lost in God finds itself again no more. Faith then makes the soul lose every distinct light; in order to place it in its own pure light.

As we see that the sun with his general light entirely covers or drowns all the little or distinct lights of the stars, which (in its absence) glow and are brightly discernible; yet do not give us a light whereby we may see things, as they are, in their proper forms and colours: so visions and ecstasies may be discernible by reason of their little extent, (being narrow and selfish) but do not fix us in the truth; they are very liable to make us mistake by their uncertain glimmering. It is the same case with all the inward openings which are not from true faith. This faith is the gift of the holy spirit, which, as it arises, undeceives the soul from the misconceptions occasioned by the others, and darkening all the self-pleasing lights, puts it in the pure and sacred light of truth; this is that alone which is safe and sure. This is that *true light which* so justly and excellently *enlighteneth every man coming into the world* of the new life in God. This light gave my heart to see its minutest faults, that nothing but pure love might be in the centre of the soul, according to these words of St. John, "He that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God; for God is love." 1 John iv. 16.

CHAPTER XI.

My senses, as I have hinted, were under a continual mortification; and I was not to give them any respite; for, to make things entirely die, one must not give them any relaxation, till their total death be quite accomplished. Some content themselves with practising great austerities, and yet frequently give some relief to the senses, which they

plead for, as innocent and necessary; whereby they keep them alive still. What destroys them most is to refuse them in general whatever pleases, and to give them whatever they dislike, so long as is necessary to render them supple without desire or aversion. Should we allow them for a time a little relaxation, it would be as if a person were condemned to die with hunger, and one should give him now and then a little food, under pretence of strengthening him a little; such an one would prolong his life and his punishment. It is the same case with our senses and natural appetites, our own spirits and wills, because if we allow them ever so little subsistence, we keep them up to the end in a dying life, which state St. Paul properly expresses *a bearing in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus*, 1 Cor. iv. 10. but afterwards to shew that it was not to terminate here, he adds, *we are dead, and our life is hid with Christ in God:* Col. iii. 3. And indeed we can never thus live in God, but by a total death. Then *old thinge are past; and all things are become new.* 2 Cor. v. 17.

He who is dead after this sort has no farther need of mortification: but a great fault is committed by some persons well inclined, who having attained the extinction of sensuality by this continual death without relaxation, take up their rest there, all their lives, without leaving that labour, through a perfect indifference, receiving alike the good and the bad, the sweet and the bitter, in order to enter upon a more useful labour, which is the mortification of *self-will*, beginning by the loss of *their own activity*, which is never done without profound prayer, no more than the death of the senses will ever be entire without a deep recollection, or inwardness, joined with morti-

fication; because, without that, the soul continuing always turned on the side of the senses, maintains them in their vigour; whereas by this inwardness it abides as it were separated from them, and contributes this way, though indirectly, more to their death than all beside.

The more thou augmented my love, and resignation, oh my God, the more my crosses became great and continual; but love rendered them light to me. Oh poor souls, who consume yourselves with endless troubles; if you sought God within yourselves, ye would find him, and with him the end of your evils. To me, as soon as one mortification ceased to be any longer such, love put me on another; for this love was so subtile and so pure, that it made me discover my very least faults: if I was going to speak, it shut my mouth; if I was silent, it moved me to speak. New faults now appeared to me in all my actions, in my manner of acting, in my mortifications, my penances, my alms, my solitude, in my very gait and manner of walking. If I spoke any thing well of myself, *pride* appeared: if I said, "I will speak no more about myself, good or bad;" *self love* was discovered, and the like. If I was too much recollected and reserved, or too free and open, this love ever shewed the remains of impurity, even in such little things; and was perfectly careful to let nothing pass. My attention was to God continually, for a more thorough discovery of, and adherence to his will: And herein I was, as it were, plunged into a river of peace and of union with God. It was a great concern to me when I went to confess; for when I thought to examine myself, this pure love seized me

with such a force, as took away every thought of the kind. When I was obliged to present myself before the priest, God gave me immediately what I should say; which when I had done, I could not open my lips to say a word more. In such a manner this divine love held me under its dependence, and that with so much grace and sweetness, that I could not but adhere to it, and it alone. I scarce heard a word of what the priest said to me. I was with my divine Spouse, my heart and attention fixed on him; for before he had thus smitten me, I was often in an agony for my faults. It was not in my power to give myself any other disposition than that which he placed in me; not that he lays violence on our liberty: Oh, by no means! But because he demands it of us, with so many attractions, and makes us do things with so much energy, love and sweetness, he inclines our hearts which way he will, and the heart follows him freely, and cannot but do it. The attraction is as free as infallible.

And yet this Love never suffers any fault to slip with impunity. He punishes with rigour his dearest and most faithful lovers. All that I could say hereupon would be out of the reach of any to comprehend, except souls of experience. This chastisement is like an interior inflammation coming from God, to purify the soul; or like a dislocated bone, which gives extreme pain, till it be reinstated.

Hard it is for the soul to bear this. Some, to shift it off, run to confess. They multiply confessions, without just cause; and so steal themselves from the designs of God. It is then of great consequence to know how to make use of this pain: and on this depends almost all the advancement or hindrance of

souls. One must then, in this dark time, second the designs of God, and bear this crucifying pain, in its full extent, as long as it shall continue, without adding thereto, or diminishing therefrom, bearing it passively, and not going about to satisfy God by acts of our own ; and for this one needs a courage that is inconceivable. Thou oh my God ! taught me not to do penance, or confess, till thou wast satisfied thyself. I saw that if I had put my hand to thy work, under pretext of bearing up the ark, I should have been punished as Uzza was.

While I am thus writing, I apprehend that this fire of strict and righteous justice is the same as that of purgatory ; for that is not an elementary fire, as some grossly imagine.* It is a fire so penetrating, that it goes into the substance of the soul ; and is that alone which can radically purify : and as these souls are divested of the body, nothing causes a diversion of the pain, no means are left of starting off from it, no amusements there to alleviate it. It consumes after a terrible manner, in every one, according to the

* The doctrine of a purgatory was no doubt sincerely believed in by many pious persons of the Roman Catholic Religion, of whom M. Guion was one. They felt assured of the truth, that "God is of purer eyes than to behold evil, and that he cannot look on iniquity ;" and consequently, that in order to find acceptance in his sight, a purgation of the soul from the corrupt leaven of this world, was absolutely necessary. And they believed, according to the tradition of their fathers, that Divine Goodness had provided for his followers, who were not yet pure and perfect enough for heaven, an intermediate place of purification and refinement beyond the grave ; but dark and mercenary priests converted these sentiments into a corrupt and lucrative doctrine. We can only lament, that the prejudices of education have had so lasting an effect on the minds of many sincerely well disposed persons, in causing them to retain opinions so opposite to the principles of the gospel.

different degrees of impurity: and it is that impurity which causes both the violence and the long continuance of this fire of justice. How true is that saying of the Apostle, "Our God is a consuming fire!"

It was in this rigorous purgation, that he purified me from every thing that was in me, contrary to his divine will. The pain of mind, caused hereby, often took from me the power of eating: I did violence to myself, to let nothing of it appear; yet they observed on my countenance a continual occupation of God; for as the attraction was strong, it diffused itself over the very senses in such sort as to bring with it, and to give me a sweetness, modesty, and majesty, which the people of the world took notice of.

CHAPTER XII.

AFTER whatsoever manner my husband and mother-in-law treated me, I answered only by silence, which was not difficult for me; because the greatness of my interior occupation, and what passed within, rendered me insensible to all the rest: yet there were times when I was left to myself; and then I could not refrain from tears, when they fell violently on me. I did the lowest offices for them, to humble myself; preventing such as had been used to do them: yet all this did not gain their favour. When they were in a rage, and I could not find that I had given them any occasion for it; yet I did not fail to beg their pardon, as also from the girl I have spoken of. I had a good deal of pain to surmount myself, as to the last; because she became the more insolent

for it; reproaching me with things which ought to have made her blush, and to have covered her with shame. As she saw that I no more resisted her nor contradicted her in any thing; she proceeded to treat me still worse; and when I asked her pardon, for the very offences which she had given me, she triumphed, saying, "I knew very well I was in the right." Her arrogance rose to that height, that I would not have treated the meanest servant, or vassal, as she treated me.

One day, as she was dressing me, she drew me very roughly, and spoke to me very insolently. I said to her, "It is not on my own account that I am willing to answer you, for what you do to me gives me no pain, but lest you should act thus before persons to whom it would give offence: moreover as I am your mistress, God is assuredly offended therewith." She left me that moment, and ran like a mad woman to meet my husband, telling him, "she would stay no longer, I treated her so ill, and that I hated her for the care she took of him in his indispositions, which were continual, wanting her not to do any service to him." As my husband was very hasty, he took fire at these words. I finished the dressing of myself alone, since she had left me, and durst not call another girl; for she would not suffer another to come near me. All of a sudden, I saw my husband coming like a lion. Whatever fury he had at any time before against me, was not equal to this. He vented himself against me in the most violent manner; he did not strike me, but in his rage threw his crutch at me, which fell very near, without touching me. The girl in the mean time came in. At the sight of her his rage redoubled. I kept near to God

during the whole time, in profound silence, as a victim disposed to suffer whatever he would permit. My husband at length ordered me to beg her pardon, which I readily did, and thereby appeased him. I went presently into my dear closet, where I no sooner was, than my divine Director ordered me to go out and make this girl a present, to recompense her for the cross which she had caused me, which I did. She was a little astonished, but her heart was too hard to be gained.

I often acted thus, when she caused me most pain, which was very frequent, and almost continual. She had a singular dexterity in attending the sick, as my husband was almost always: from hence none but she would be suffered to touch him. For this reason he had a very great regard for her. Moreover, she was so artful that before him she affected an extraordinary respect for me: but when he was not present, if I said a word to her, though with the greatest mildness; if she heard him coming, she cried out with all her might, that she was unhappy; and acted the distressed in such a manner, that, without informing himself of the truth, he put himself in a passion against me, as did my mother-in-law too.

The violence I did to my proud and hasty nature was so great, that I could hold out no longer. I was quite spent with it. It seemed sometimes as if my very entrails were tearing, and often I fell sick. She did not forbear exclaiming against me, even before persons of distinction, who came to see me. If I was silent, she took offence at that yet more, and said, I despised her. She spoke against me, and made complaints to every body: but all this redounded to my honour and her own disgrace: my reputation

was so well established on account of my exterior modesty, my devotion, and the great acts of charity which I did, that nothing could shake it.

I am surprized at the blindness of confessors, and at the little truth of the accusations of themselves which some of their penitents make; for the confessor of this girl made her pass for a saint. This he said in my hearing; I answered nothing; for Love would not admit my speaking of my troubles; but that I should consecrate them all to him by a profound silence.

My husband was out of humour with my devotion, thinking, that by loving God so much, I should love him the less; so little did he comprehend that the true conjugal love is that which God himself forms in the heart that loves him. I endeavoured not to be disagreeable to my husband in any thing, and to please him in every thing he could require of me. God gave me such a purity of soul at that time, that I had not so much as a bad thought. Sometimes my husband said to me, "One sees well that you do not lose the presence of God."

The world, seeing I quitted it, persecuted and turned me into ridicule. I was its entertainment, and the subject of its fables. It could not bear that a woman, who was scarce twenty years of age, should make so strong a war against it. I was as one lost, and all alone: so little commerce had I with the world, farther than necessity required. I seemed to experience literally those words of St. Paul, "I live, yet no more I, but Christ liveth in me;" for he was become the soul of my soul, and the life of my life. His operations were so powerful, so sweet, and so secret, all together, that I could not express them.

We went into the country about some business. I sought for solitude in a corner of the river that was dry. Who could tell what thou, oh my God, wrought in my soul at that time? thou alone who didst it knew it.

I arose at four o'clock in the morning to pray. I went very far to the church, which was so situated that the coach could not come to it. There was a steep hill to go down, and another to go up. All that cost me nothing: I had such a longing desire to meet with God, as my only good, who on his part was graciously forward to give his assistance to his poor creature, and for it to do even visible miracles. Such as saw me lead a life so different from the women of the world, said I was a fool. They attributed it to stupidity. Sometimes they said, "What can all this mean? Some people think this lady has parts, but nothing of them appears." For if I went into company, often I could not speak; so much was I engaged within, so inward with the Lord, as not to attend to any thing else: if any near me spoke, I heard nothing of what they said. I generally took one with me that it might not appear. I took some work to hide, under the appearance of employ, the real employ which passed within. When I was alone, the work dropped out of my hands; and I could do nothing else but resign myself to be wholly taken up with love. I wanted to persuade a relation of my husband's to practise prayer. She thought me a fool, for depriving myself of all the diversions of the age: but the Lord has since opened her eyes, to make her despise them. I could have wished to teach all the world to love God; and thought it depended only

on them to feel what I felt. God made use of that, to gain himself many souls.

The good father I have spoken of, who was the instrument of my conversion, brought me acquainted with Genevieve Granger, Prioress of the Benedictines, one of the greatest servants of God of her time. She proved of very great service to me, as in the sequel will appear. My confessor, who had told every one that I was a saint before, when so full of miseries, and so far from the condition to which God in his mercy had now brought me, seeing that I placed a confidence in the Father of whom I have spoken, and that I steered in a road which was unknown to him, declared openly against me; and the monks of his order persecuted me much. They even preached publickly against me, as a person under a delusion.

My husband and mother-in-law, who till now had been indifferent about this confessor, then joined him and ordered me to leave off prayer and the exercise of piety; but that I could not do. Even when I was in company, God seized my heart most powerfully. There was carried on a conversation within me, very different from that which passed without. I did what I could to hinder it from appearing, but could not. The presence of so great a Master manifested itself, even on my countenance; and that pained my husband, as he sometimes told me.

I took almost every day the discipline. I had often grievous maladies, and no consolation in life, but in the practice of prayer, and in seeing Mother Granger. But how dear these cost me, especially the former! I may say that prayer to me was recompensed *with the cross*, and the cross *with prayer*. Oh inseparable gifts, united in my heart and life! When

your eternal light has risen in my soul, how perfectly has it reconciled me, and made you the object of my love! My confessor at first exerted his efforts to hinder me from practising prayer, and from seeing Mother Granger.

And, as he stirred up my husband and mother-in-law to hinder me from prayer; the method they took to effect it was to watch me from morning till night. I durst not go from my mother-in-law's chamber, or my husband's bed-side. Sometimes I carried my work to the window, under a pretence of seeing better, in order to relieve myself with some moments of repose; but they came to watch me very closely, to see if I did not pray instead of work. When my husband and mother-in-law played at cards, if I did but turn towards the fire, they watched to see if I wrought, and if I did not shut my eyes; if they observed I did, they would be in a fury against me for several hours: but what is most strange, when my husband went abroad, having some days of health, he would not allow me to pray in his absence. He marked my work, and sometimes, after he was just gone out, returning immediately, if he found me in my closet, he would be in a rage. I said to him, "But, Sir, what matters it what I do when you are absent, if I be assiduous in attending you when you are present?" That would not satisfy him; he insisted upon it that I should no more pray in his absence than in his presence. I believe there is hardly a torment equal to that of being ardently drawn to retirement, and not having it in one's power to be retired: but, oh my God, the war they raised, to hinder me from loving thee, did but augment my love; and while they were striving to prevent my addresses

to thee, thou drew me into an inexpressible silence; and the more they laboured to separate me from thee, the more closely didst thou unite me to thyself: the flame of thy love was kindled, and kept up, by every thing that was done to extinguish it.

I often out of condescension played at piquet with my husband, and at such times was even more interiorly attracted than if I had been at church. I was scarce able to contain the fire which burned in my soul, which had all the fervour of what men call love, but nothing of its impetuosity; for the more ardent, the more peaceable it was. This fire arose from every thing that was done to suppress it; and the spirit of prayer was nourished and increased from their contrivances and endeavours to disallow me any time for practising it. I loved, without motive, or reason for loving; for nothing passed in my head, but much in the innermost of my soul. I thought not about any recompence, gift or favour, or any thing which regards the lover. The Well-beloved was the only object, which attracted my heart wholly to himself. I could not contemplate his attributes. I knew nothing else, but to *love* and to *suffer*. Oh, ignorance more truly learned than any science of the Doctors, since it so well taught me Jesus Christ crucified, and brought me to be in love with his holy Cross. In its beginnings I was attracted with so much force, that it seemed as if my head was going to depart from its place, to join my heart. I found that insensibly my body bent in spite of me. I did not then comprehend from whence it came; but have learned since, that as all passed in the will, which is the sovereign of the powers, *that* attracted the others after it, and re-united them in God their divine centre, and sove-

reign happiness : and as these powers were then unaccustomed to be united, it required the more violence to effect that union : wherefore it was the more perceived. Afterwards it became so strongly rivetted as to seem to be quite natural. This was so strong, that I could have wished to die, in order to be inseparably united, without any interstice, to him who so powerfully attracted my heart. As all passed in the will, the imagination and the understanding being absorbed in it, in an union of enjoyment, I knew not what to say, having never read or heard of such a state as I experienced ; for before this I had known nothing of the operations of God in souls. I had only read Philothea (written by St. Francis of Sales) with the imitation of Jesus Christ (by Thomas a Kempis) and the holy Scriptures ; also the Spiritual Combat, which mentions nothing of these things.

Then all the pleasures that people are so extremely fond of appeared to me so insipid, that I wondered how I could ever amuse myself with them. I said, if God brought the most sensual persons to feel what I feel, they would soon quit their false pleasures, to enjoy so substantial a good. I wondered not that the Martyrs gave their lives for Jesus Christ. I thought them happy, and wished to have the like occasion of suffering for him myself. The peculiar property of this prayer of the heart is to give a strong faith. Mine was without limits, as was also my resignation to God, and my confidence in him, my love of his will, and of the orders of his providence over me. I was very timorous before, but now feared nothing. It is in such a case that one feels the efficacy of these words of the gospel, "My yoke is easy, and my burden is light." Matt. xi. 30.

CHAPTER XIII.

I HAD a secret desire given me from that time to be wholly devoted to the disposal of my God, let it be what it would. I said, "What couldst thou demand of me that I would not willingly sacrifice or offer thee? Oh, spare me not." I could scarce hear speak of God, or our Lord Jesus Christ, without being almost ravished out of myself. What surprised me most was the great difficulty I had to say the vocal prayers I had been used to say. As soon as I opened my lips to pronounce them, the love of God seized me so strongly, that I was swallowed up in a profound silence, and a peace not to be expressed. I made fresh essays, but still in vain. I began, but could not go on. And as I had never before heard of such a state, I knew not what to do. My inability therein still increased, because my love to God was still growing more strong, more violent, and more overpowering. There was made in me, without the sound of words, a continual prayer, which seemed to me to be the prayer of our Lord Jesus Christ himself; a prayer of the Word which is made by the Spirit, which, according to St. Paul, *asketh for us that which is good, perfect, and conformable to the Will of God.* Rom. viii. 26. 27.

After some time I was proved with dryness and pain of mind; and finding no more of that enlivening vigour that carried me on to do good with great sweetness, my passions (which were not thoroughly mortified) revived and caused me new conflicts. I relapsed into a vain complacency and fondness for

myself. That propensity to pride and vanity, which seemed quite dead, while I was so filled with the love of God, now shewed itself alive, and attacked me again; which made me lament the exterior beauty of my person, and pray to God incessantly, that he would remove from me that obstacle. I would have wished to be deaf, blind and dumb, that nothing might divert me from my love of God.

I set off on a journey, in which I appeared more than ever like those lamps, which emit a new flash of brightness, when they are just on the point of going out. Alas! how many snares were laid in my way? I met them at every step. I fell into infidelities. But, oh my God, with what rigour didst thou punish them! How many tears did those, inadvertent faults cost me which I fell into, through a weak compliance, and even against my will! Thou knowest, oh my Love, that thy rigour, exercised after my slips, was not the motive of those tears. With what pleasure would I have suffered still more, not to be unfaithful; and to what severe chastisement did I not condemn myself! Sometimes thou treated me like a father who pities the child, and caresses it after its involuntary faults. How often didst thou make me sensible that thou loved me, notwithstanding my blemishes hereby contracted. It was the sweetness of this love after my fall, which caused my greatest pain; for the more thou appeared amiable and good to me, the more inconsolable I was for departing ever so little from thee. When I had let some neglect escape me, I found thee ready to receive me: And I said to thee, "oh my God! is it possible that thou canst be so gracious to an offender, and so indulgent to my faults; so propitious to me who wan-

der astray from thee, through base compliances, and an unworthy fondness for frivolous objects? yet no sooner do I return to thee, than I find thee waiting for such return, with open arms ready to receive me."

O sinner, sinner! Hast thou any reason to complain of God? ah, if there yet remain any justice in thee, confess the truth, and that it is owing to thyself that thou goest wrong; that in departing from him thou disobeyest his call; and that, after all this, when thou returnest, he is ready to receive thee; and if thou returnest not, he makes use of the most engaging and prevalent motives to win thee thereto: all this on his part; now survey how it is on thy part. Thou turnest a deaf ear to his voice; thou wilt not hear him. Thou sayest, he speaks not to thee, though he calls loudly. It is therefore only because thou daily rebellest, and art growing daily more and more deaf to *the voice of the charmer*. Oh my love, I am sure thou didst not cease to speak to my heart, and wast ever ready to succour me in the time of necessity.

When I was at Paris, and the confessors saw me so young, they appeared astonished. After I had confessed, they told me, "that I could never enough thank God for the graces conferred on me; that if I knew them I should be amazed at them; and that if I were not faithful, I should be the most ungrateful of all creatures." Some declared that they never knew any woman whom God held so closely, and in so great a purity of conscience. What rendered it so was the continual care thou hadst over me, oh my God, making me feel thy intimate presence, even as thou hast promised it to us in thy gospel. "If a man love me, we will come unto him, and make our abode

with him," John xiv. 23. The continual experience of thy presence in me was what preserved me. I became deeply assured of what thy prophet had said, *Except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain.* Psa. cxxvii. 1. Thou, oh my Love, wast my faithful keeper, who didst continually defend my heart against all kinds of enemies, preventing the least faults, or correcting them when vivacity had occasioned their being committed. But alas! my dearest Love, when thou ceased to watch, or left me to myself, how weak was I, and how easily did my enemies prevail over me! Let others ascribe their victories to their own fidelity. As for me I shall never attribute them to any thing else than thy paternal care over me. I have too often experienced, to my cost, what I should be without thee, to presume in the least on any cares of my own. It is to thee, and to thee only, that I owe every thing, oh my deliverer; and it is an infinite joy to me that I am indebted to thee for it.

While I was at Paris, I relaxed in my usual exercises, on account of the little time I had, and the pain and dryness which had seized my heart, the hand which sustained me being hid, and my Beloved withdrawn. I did many things which I should not; for I knew the extreme fondness which some had for me, and suffered them to please me with it, though I was not alone. I wept bitterly because I plainly saw I was too remiss; and that was my torment. I sought all about for him who had secretly inflamed my heart. I enquired for tidings of him. But alas! hardly any body knew him. I said to him, "Oh thou best beloved of my soul, hadst thou been near me, these disasters had not befallen me. Tell me where thou

feedest, where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon in the bright day of eternity, which is not, like the day of time, subject to night and eclipses ?" When I say, I said this to him, I must explain myself. In reality it all passed almost in silence, and I could not speak. My heart had a language which was carried on without the sound of words, understood of its well-beloved, as he understands the language of the word ever eloquent, which speaks incessantly in the innermost of the soul. Oh language, which experience only gives the comprehension of ! Let not any think it a barren language, an effect of the imagination. Far different from that is the silent language of the word in the soul. As he never ceases to speak, so he never ceases to operate. *Dixit et facta sunt.* He effects in the soul what he speaks in it. This is a substantial expressive word, which operates infinitely more than all that one can conceive : it continues for ever fixed and unchangeable, a word which is comprehended of him, in whom it is spoken, only by its effects. This ineffable word communicates to the soul in which it resides, a facility of speaking without words ; the language of the word in the soul, and of the soul by the word, wonderfully corresponding ; the language of the blessed in heaven ; well understood among congenial spirits, even without the medium of words, diffusing among them the union of grace, peace and sweetness ; and productive of such benefits as nothing but experience can declare. Oh if souls were pure enough, they would thus participate before hand the language of heaven.

But this no creature can procure of itself ; for its silence, being only from its own efforts, would not

have the effect of the grace which I am speaking of, not having the same principle. If people once came to know the operations of God, in souls resigned to his guidance, it would fill them with reverent admiration.

To return to my subject, from which I have departed, to follow the impetuosity of the spirit which makes me write, which will be likely to happen to me sometimes; (wherefore, sir, I beg you to excuse the little regularity of this history which you have required of me, not being in a condition to write otherwise.)

As I saw that the purity of my state was like to be sullied by too great a commerce with the world, I made haste to finish what detained me at Paris, in order to get back into the country. The pain which I felt, after my faults, was inexpressible. It was like a devouring fire, which ceased not till the soul was purified, and the transgression consumed by it. It was a banishment of my soul from the presence of its beloved, its bridegroom. I could have no access to him, and because I could have no rest out of him, I knew not what to do. I was like the dove out of the ark, which finding no rest for the sole of her foot, was constrained to return to the ark; but, finding the window shut, could only fly about it, without entering into it. In the mean time, through an infidelity which will forever render me culpable, I sometimes strove to find some satisfactions without, but could not. This essay served to convince me of my folly, and of the vanity of those pleasures which are called innocent. When I was prevailed on to taste them, I felt a strong repulse, which, joined with my remorse for the transgression, changed my diversion into torment. I said, "Oh my God! This is none

of thee; and nothing else, beside thee, can give solid pleasure."

One day, as much through unfaithfulness as complaisance, I went on a jaunt to the Course, rather through excess of vanity to shew myself there, than to take the pleasure of the walk. Oh my God! How didst thou make me sensible of this fault? some coaches were untied and offered to us: but far from punishing me in letting me go to the pleasure, thou didst it in holding me so close to thyself, that I could give no attention to any thing but my faults and thy displeasure. After this I was regaled at an entertainment at St. Cloud, to which some other ladies were invited. It was very magnificent. They, though wise in the eye of the world, could relish it; but to me it was filled with bitterness. I could eat nothing. What tears did it cost me! For above three months my Beloved withdrew his favouring presence, and I could see nothing but an angry God for me.

I was on this occasion, and in another journey which I took with my husband into Touraine, before I fell into the small pox, like those animals destined for slaughter, which on certain days they adorn with greens and flowers, and bring in pomp into the city, before they kill them; this weak beauty, now in its decline, cast forth new flames, in order to become the sooner extinct.

She concludes this chapter with a little narrative, of a singular mark of the special care of God over her. As she was going to church on foot followed by her footman, she was met on a bridge by one in the appearance of a poor man, to whom she was going to hand her alms. He refused, and spoke to her in a wonderful manner, first of God and of divine things; then to her own state, as if he knew it. He told her of her love and charity, but too great fondness of her own beauty, to which her heart was obliged to assent. At

CHAPTER XIV.

AFTER this my husband, enjoying some intermission of his almost continual ailments, had a mind to go to Orleans, and from thence into Touraine. In this journey my vanity made its last blaze. I received abundance of visits and applauses. But how clearly did I perceive the folly of men who doat on a vain beauty! I disliked the passion, yet not that in myself which caused it, though I sometimes ardently desired to be delivered from it. The continual combat of nature and grace cost me no small affliction. Nature was pleased with public applause; but grace made me dread it. What augmented the harm was, that they esteemed in me virtue joined with youth and beauty; not knowing that all the virtue was only in thee, oh my God, and in thy protection, and all the weakness in myself.

I went in search of confessors to accuse myself of my failings, and to bewail my backslidings: but they were utterly insensible of my pain. They esteemed, O God, what thou condemned. They treated as a virtue what to me appeared detestable in thy sight. Far from measuring my faults by thy graces, they only considered what I was, in comparison of what I might have been: hence, instead of blaming me,

*st he told her, that God required of her not to content herself with labouring as others did, to secure her salvation, only by avoiding the pains of hell; but to arrive at such perfection and purity in this life, as to escape those of purgatory. She asked him who he was. He replied, "he had formerly been a beggar; but now was such no more." A little after, she looked on all sides for him, but saw him not. Nor did she ever see him either before or since.

they only flattered my pride, and justified me in what incurred thy rebuke; or only treated as a slight fault, what in me was highly displeasing to thee, from whom I had received such signal mercies.

The heinousness of sins is not to be measured singly by their nature, but also by the state of the person who commits them. I told them all the trouble I had been under, on account of my dress. They assured me that I was very modestly dressed; and as my husband liked it, there could be nothing amiss in it. My inward director told me quite the contrary; but I had not courage enough to follow him, and to dress myself after a manner singular at my age. Beside, my vanity furnished me with pretences, seemingly just, for following the mode. Oh if confessors knew what hurt they do, in humouring female vanity, they would be more severe against it. Had I but found one of them honest enough to deal plainly with me, I should not have gone on thus; no, not for a moment. But my vanity, siding with my confessors and my waiting-maids, induced me to think them in the right, and my own scruples to be only mere fancy.

There befell us in this journey some accidents and dangers, which would have frightened any body but myself; it was not in my power to fear such as appeared inevitable; not even when all beside were in the utmost fright. We found ourselves embarrassed and dismayed, all at unawares, in a place undermined by the river Loire. This road, which from above appeared even, was a hollowed piece of ground by the river's side. We did not perceive our danger, till we found we could not turn to the right or left, but must either go on or fall into the river. A part of

the coach rolled in the air, borne up by footmen on the farther side. The fright was so great, nothing could exceed it. As for me, I felt none. I found myself so much resigned to God, for all events which his providence might permit, that I rejoiced at the prospect of losing my life by a stroke of his hand. Yet I had a secret faith that we should pass safely, and so it proved.

At my return I went to see Mother Granger, to whom I related how it had been with me while abroad. She strengthened and encouraged me to resume my former course. But God, who had withheld his indignation for a long train of infidelities, now caused it to fall with the greater rigour. He deprived me of all his gifts, in order that I should not abuse any more what he had given me only to glorify him therewith. I had many times a desire to take some money, and go into a convent, thinking it lawful to do so, because I imagined it impossible to correspond so well with God in the world, so many avocations occurring therein. I would have been glad to have found some cavern, to have buried myself alive in it, and thought the most frightful prison desirable rather than so fatal a liberty. I was as it were torn asunder between two opposite powers; for vanity drew me outward, and divine love inward: [illegible] as I did not turn myself constantly to either, I suffered through this partition what I cannot express.

I begged of thee, oh my God, to take from me entirely the liberty which I had of displeasing thee. I said to thee, Art not thou strong enough to hinder this unjust duplicity? for as soon as I had an opportunity to expose my vanity, I did it; and after I had done it, I returned to thee; and thou, far from re-

jecting me, often received me with open arms: that goodness has affected me with greater sorrow for my revolts, for though I had this miserable vanity, yet such was my love that, after my faults, I was more pleased with thy rigours than with thy caresses; thy interests were dearer to me than my own; and I could not bear thy not doing justice to thyself for my crimes. My heart was penetrated with love and with grief. And what heightened the latter was that I should displease thee after such favours received from thee. I could not but cry out against my ingratitude. That those who know thee not sin against thee surprises me not; but that this heart, which loves thee more than itself, and has received such testimonies of thy love, suffers itself to be seduced by propensities which it detests, oh, 'tis its most cruel martyrdom, the more painful as it so long continues. Oh my God, said I, when I felt most strongly thy presence, and thy love, how wonderfully thou bestowest thy favours on such an unworthy creature, who requites thee only with base returns! For if any one reads this life with attention, he will see on God's part nothing but goodness, mercy and love; and on my part nothing but weakness, sin and infidelity. If there is any thing that is good, it is thine, O my God! As for me I have nothing to glory in but my infirmities and my unworthiness, since, in that everlasting marriage-union thou hast made with me, I brought with me nothing but weakness, sin and misery. Oh my Love! How I rejoice to owe all to thee, and that thou favourest my heart with a sight of the treasures and boundless riches of thy grace and love! thou hast dealt by me as if a magnificent king should marry a poor slave, forget

her slavery, give her all the ornaments which may render her pleasing in his eyes, and with pleasure pardon her all the faults and ill qualities which her ignorance and bad education have given her. This thou hast made my case. My poverty is become my riches, and in the extremity of my weakness I have found my strength. Oh if any knew with what confusion the indulgent favours of God, after its faults, cover the soul! 'tis inconceivable. Such a soul would wish with all its powers to satisfy the divine justice. I made verses and little songs to bewail myself. I performed penances, but they were too light for so large a wound. They were like those drops of water which only serve to increase the heat. When I take a view of God and myself, I am obliged to cry out, "Oh admirable conduct of Love toward an ungrateful wretch! Oh horrible ingratitude toward such unparalleled goodness!" A great part of my life is only a mixture of such things as might be enough to sink me to the grave betwixt grief and love.

CHAPTER XV.

On my arrival at home I found my little daughter ill, and like to die of the small-pox. My husband was seized with the gout, and with his other complaints. My eldest son also took the small-pox with so much malignancy, that at last it rendered him as much disfigured, as before he had been beautiful. As soon as I saw the small-pox in the house, I had no doubt but I should take it. Mother Granger advised me timely to remove, if I could. My father offered to take me to his house with my second

son, whom I tenderly loved. But my mother-in-law would not suffer it. She persuaded my husband it was useless, and sent for a physician who seconded her in it, saying, "I should as readily take it at a distance as here, if I were disposed to take it." I may say she proved at that time a second Jeptha, and that she sacrificed us both innocently. Had she known what was to follow, I doubt not but she would have acted otherwise. All the town stirred in this affair. Every one begged her to send me out of the house, and cried out that it was cruel thus to expose me. They set upon me too, imagining I was unwilling to go; for I told nobody that she would not let me go. I had at that time no other disposition but to sacrifice myself to divine Providence. And though I might have removed, notwithstanding my mother's resistance, yet I would not without her consent; because it looked to me as if her resistance were an order of heaven. Oh divine will of my God! thou wast then my only life in the midst of all my miseries.

I continued in this resignation, and spirit of sacrifice to God, waiting for whatever he should be pleased to order. I cannot express what nature suffered: for I was like one who sees both certain death and an easy remedy, without being able to avoid the former, or try the latter. I had no less apprehension for my younger son than for myself: my mother-in-law so excessively doated on the eldest, that the rest of us were all indifferent to her: yet I am assured, if she had known that the younger would have died of the small-pox, she would not have done as she did. God makes use of creatures, and their natural inclinations, to accomplish his designs. When I see in the creatures a conduct which appears unreasonable

and mortifying, I mount higher, and look upon them as instruments both of the justice and mercy of God, for his justice is all full of mercy.

When I told my husband that I had a pain at the heart, and was taking the small-pox; he said, it was only imagination. I let Mother Granger know the situation I was in. As she had a tender heart, she was pained with these marks of hardness, and encouraged me to offer myself up to the Lord. At length, nature finding there was no resource, on the fourth of October 1672, aged twenty-four years and some months, being at mass, I found myself extremely ill, and like to faint. Having got home, I was taken with a great shivering, and a pain, both in my head and heart. They would not believe that I was sick, (it was permitted that they should have this hardness for me) but in a few hours it went so far, that they thought my life in danger; for I was taken with a fluxion in my breast, and the remedies for the one were contrary to the other. A doctor, a favourite of my mother-in-law, was not in town, nor the surgeon who lived in it. Another surgeon was sent for, who said, "I must be bled;" but my mother-in-law would not suffer it at that time to be done. I remained abandoned in such a manner, that I was on the point of death for want of succour. My husband, not being able to see me, left me entirely to his mother. She would not allow any physician but her own to prescribe for me, and yet did not send for him, though he was within a day's journey of us. In this extremity I opened not my mouth to request any succour. I looked for life or death from the hand of God, without testifying the least uneasiness at so extraordinary a conduct. The peace I enjoyed within, on account of that perfect resignation, in which

God kept me by his grace, was so great, that it made me forget myself, in the midst of such violent maladies and pressing dangers. I may say, God's protection has been wonderful to me. Many times have I been reduced to extremity, but he never failed to succour, when things appeared most desperate. It pleased him so to order it, that a skilful surgeon, who had served me before, passing by our house, enquired after me. They told him I was extremely ill. He alighted immediately, and came in to see me. Never man was more surprised, when he saw the frightful condition I was in. The small-pox, which could not come out, had rendered some parts of my face quite black. He went down into my mother-in-law's chamber, and told her, "it was a most shameful thing to leave me to die in that manner, for want of bleeding." She still opposed it so violently, that at length she told him plainly, "she would not suffer it." He flew into such a rage, at seeing me thus left without sending for a physician, that he did not spare his tongue, in uttering very grating and grievous things to my mother-in-law; but all in vain. Upon that he came up again into my chamber, and said, "If you will, I will bleed you, and save your life." I held out my arm to him; and, though it was extremely swelled, he bled me in an instant. My mother-in-law was in a violent passion about it. The small-pox came out immediately: and he ordered that they should have me bled again in the evening, but she would not suffer it; and I durst not retain him, whatever occasion I had for it, for fear of displeasing my mother-in-law, and through a total resignation of myself into the hands of God. I am the more particular in this relation to shew how

advantageous it is to resign one's self to God without reserve. Though in appearance he leave us for a time, to prove and exercise our faith, yet he never fails us, when our need of him is the most pressing: One may say with the Scripture, "It is God who bringeth down to the gates of death, and raiseth up again." The blackness and swelling went off; and I believe, had they continued to bleed me, I had been pretty easy; but for want of that I fell back again. The malady fell into my eyes, and inflamed them with such severe pain, that I thought I should lose them both.

I had those violent pains for three weeks, during which I got very little sleep. I could not shut my eyes, they were so full of the small-pox, nor open them by reason of the pain I endured. I was quite easy at the thoughts of being blind, as there was the greatest likelihood of it. My throat, palate, and gums were likewise so filled that I could not swallow broth, or take any nourishment, without suffering extremely. My whole body looked like that of a leper. All who saw me said, they had never seen such a shocking spectacle. But as to my soul, it was kept in a contentment not to be expressed. The hopes of its liberty, by the loss of that beauty which had been my grief, rendered it so well satisfied, and so united to God, that it would not have changed its condition for that of the most happy Prince in the world.

Every one thought I would be inconsolable; and several expressed their sympathy with my sad condition, as they judged; while I lay still, in the secret fruition of a joy unspeakable, in this total deprivation of what had been a snare to my pride. I praised

God in profound silence. None ever heard any complaints from me, either of my pains, or the loss I sustained. All was well received as from God's hand. The only thing that I said was, that I rejoiced at, and was exceeding thankful for the interior liberty I gained thereby; and they made a great crime to me of that. My confessor who had been dissatisfied with me before came to see me. He ask-me if I was not sorry for having the small-pox; and he now taxed me with pride on my speaking thus.

My little boy (the younger son) took the small-pox the same day with myself, of which he died for want of care. This blow indeed struck me to the heart, which yet, drawing strength from my weakness, I offered him up, and said to God as did Job, "Thou gave him to me, and thou hast taken him from me. Blessed be thy holy name." The spirit of sacrifice possessed me so strongly, that, though I loved this child tenderly, I never shed a tear at hearing of his death. The day he was buried, the doctor sent to tell me that he had not placed a tombstone upon his grave, because my little girl could not live over two days. My eldest son was not yet out of danger, so that I saw myself almost stripped of all my children, my husband indisposed, and myself extremely so. God did not take my little girl then. He prolonged her life some years, to make the loss more painful to me.

At last my mother-in-law's physician arrived, at a time wherein he could be of but little service to me. When he saw the great inflammation in my eyes, he caused me to be bled several times; but it was too late. And those bleedings which would have been so proper at first, did nothing but weaken me

now. They could not even bleed me in the condition I was in, but with the greatest difficulty; for my arms were so swelled, that the surgeon was obliged to push in the lance to a great depth. Moreover the bleeding being out of season, had like to have caused my death, which I confess would have been very agreeable to me. I looked upon death as the greatest blessing for me. Yet I saw well that I had nothing to hope on that side; and that, instead of meeting with so desirable an event, I must prepare myself to support the trials of life.

After my eldest son was grown better, he got up and came into my chamber. I was surprised at the extraordinary change I saw in him. His face, lately all fair and beautiful, was become like a coarse lump of earth, all full of furrows. That gave me the curiosity to view myself in a looking-glass. It was then that I saw that God had ordered the sacrifice in all its reality. They sent me pomatums to recover my complexion, and to fill up the hollows of the small-pox. I had seen wonderful effects thereof upon others, and therefore at first had a mind to try to make use of them: but love, jealous of his work, would not suffer it. There was a voice in my heart which said, "If I would have had thee fair, I would have left thee as thou was." I was therefore obliged to lay aside every remedy, and to go into the air, which made the hollows worse, to expose myself in the streets to the eyes of every one, when the redness of the small-pox was at the worst, in order to make my humiliation triumph, where I had exalted my pride.

My husband kept his bed almost all that time, and made good use of his indisposition. Only as he now

found no more of that agreeableness in me, which before had given him pleasure, he grew much more susceptible of impressions which any gave him against me. In consequence of this, the persons who spoke to him to my disadvantage, finding themselves now better hearkened to, spoke more boldly and more frequently. There was only thou, oh my God, who changed not for me. Thou redoubled thy interior graces in proportion as thou augmented my exterior crosses.

CHAPTER XVI.

My waiting-maid became every day more haughty: and as the enemy incited her to torment me, seeing that her scoldings and outcries did not disturb me, she thought if she could hinder me from going to the communion, she should give me the greatest of all vexations. Therein she was in the right, oh divine spouse of pure sonls, since the only satisfaction of my life was to receive and to honour thee. I procured, as much as was in my power, the churches to be well adorned. I gave every thing of the finest I had, to furnish them with ornaments, and contributed, to the utmost extent of my abilities, to make them have silver pyxes and chalices. I see a perpetual lamp for a memento to me, that the fire of my love might never be suffered to go out. I said to thee, "Oh my love let me be thy victim. Spare nothing to annihilate me." I felt an inexpressible longing to be more reduced, and to become nothing at all.

This girl then knew my attraction for the holy sa-

crament, where, when I could have liberty for it, I passed several hours on my knees. She took it in her head to watch me daily. When she discovered my going thither, she ran to tell my mother-in-law and my husband. There needed no more to chagrin them. Their invectives lasted the whole day. If a word escaped me in my own justification, it was enough to make them say, I was guilty of sacrilege; and to raise an outcry against devotion. If I made them no answer at all, that still heightened their indignation and made them say the most disagreeable things they could devise. If I fell sick, which often happened, they took occasion to come to quarrel with me in my bed, saying, my communions and prayers were what made me sick.

She told me one day in a passion, that she was going to write to him whom she thought was my director, and to get him to stop me from going to the communion. And when I made her no answer, she cried out as loud as she could, "that I treated her ill and despised her." When I went to mass, she ran to tell my husband (though I had taken care before to order every thing about the house) "that I was gone abroad, and had left nothing in order." When I returned rage fell on me in all its violence; and they would hear none of my reasons, but said, "they were all falsehoods." My mother-in-law persuaded my husband, being now sick, "that I let every thing go to wreck; and that if she did not take care he would be ruined." He believed it, and I bore all with patience, endeavouring as well as I could, to do my duty. What gave me most trouble was not to know what course to take; for when I ordered any thing without her, she complained "that I

shewed her no respect, that I did things of my own head, and they were done the worse for it." Then she would order them quite contrary: if I consulted her to know what, or how she would have any thing done, she said, "she must have the care and trouble of every thing."

I had scarce any rest but what I found in the love of God, and submission to his orders. They incessantly watched my words and actions, to find occasion against me. They chid me all the day long, continually repeating over and over the same things, and that before the footmen. How often have I made my meals on my tears, which were interpreted as the most criminal in the world! I made them no replies. The love of God so closely possessed me, that it would not allow me to seek relief by a single word, or even by a look. Sometimes I said in myself, "Oh, that I had but any one who would take notice of me, or to whom I might unbosom myself, what relief to me would it be!" But it was not granted me.

Though I loved my father extremely, and he loved me very tenderly, yet I never spoke to him thereof. One of my relations, who loved me much, perceived the little moderation they used toward me. Before him they spoke very roughly to me. He, highly displeased, went and told my father of it, adding, that I should pass for a fool. Soon after I went to see my father, who, contrary to his custom, sharply reprimanded me "for suffering them to treat me in such a manner, without saying any thing in my own defence, adding, every one talked of me for it; that it looked as if I had neither sense nor spirit to vindicate myself." I answered my father, "If they remarked what my husband said to me, that was con-

fusion enough for me without my bringing any more of it on myself by replies; that if they did not remark it, I ought not to cause it to be remarked, nor expose my husband's weakness; that "saying nothing ended all disputes, whereas by my replies I might cause them to be continued and increased." My father answered, "I did well, and that I should continue to act as God should inspire me:" And after that, he never spoke to me of it any more.

They were ever talking to me against my father, my relations, and such as I respected most. I could not forbear to defend them, and therein I did wrong; as whatever I said served only to provoke them. If any complained of my father or relations, they were always in the right. If any, whom they had disliked before, spoke against these, such were presently approved of. If any shewed friendship to me, such were not welcome. A relation, whom I greatly loved for her piety, coming to see me, they openly bade her be gone, or treated her in such a manner as obliged her to it, which gave me no small uneasiness. When any considerable person came, they would be speaking against me; even to persons who knew me not, which surprised them: but when they saw me, they pitied me.

Whatever they said against me, love would not allow me to justify myself. I spoke not to my husband of what either my mother-in-law or the girl did to me, except the first year, when I was not sufficiently touched with the power of God, to suffer such treatment. Nay, I did more than this; for as my mother-in-law and my husband were both very passionate, they often quarrelled. Then I was in favour, and to me they made their mutual complaints.

I never told the one what the other had said. And though it might have been of service to me, humanly speaking, to take the advantage of such opportunity, I never made use of it to complain of either: Nay, on the contrary, I did not rest till I had reconciled them. I spoke many obliging things of the one to the other, which always made them friends again; though I knew, by the frequent experience I had, that I should pay dear for their re-union: for scarce were there reconciled, but they joined together against me.

I was so deeply engaged within, as often to forget things without, yet not any thing which was of consequence. I went into the garden, without observing any thing in it; and when my husband, who could not go thither, asked me about it, I knew not what to say, at which he was angry. I went thither on purpose to remark every thing, in order to tell him about them; and yet, when there, did not think of looking at them. I went thither ten times one day, to see and bring an account to my husband, and yet still forgot it. When I did remember to look at them, I was much pleased.

When they were telling any disagreeable news; to mortify my curiosity, I used, under some pretext or other, to retire. When my husband afterward would be talking to me about it, I betrayed my ignorance of the matter, and that put him into a rage against me, which I would gladly have avoided being the occasion of; as I was very desirous of doing my duty, and rendering every thing agreeable to him, so far as was in my power, consistent therewith.

All my crosses to me would have seemed little, if, in the interior attraction I felt, I might have had lib-

erty to pray, and to be alone: but I was obliged still to continue in their presence with such a subjection as is scarcely conceivable. My husband looked on his watch, if at any time I had liberty allowed me for prayer, to see if I stayed at it above half an hour. If I exceeded it, he grew very uneasy. I said to him sometimes, "Grant me one hour to divert myself." And though he would have granted it to me for other diversions, yet for prayer he would not. I confess my little experience caused me much trouble, and that I often thereby gave occasion for what they made me suffer: for ought not I to have looked on my captivity as an effect of the will of God, to content myself therein, and to make it my only desire and prayer. But I often fell back again into the anxiety of wishing to get time for prayer; which was not agreeable to my husband. It is true those faults were more frequent in the beginning. Afterwards I prayed to God in his own retreat, in the temple of my heart, and then I went out no more.

CHAPTER XVII.

We went into the country, where I committed many faults, letting myself go too much after my inward attraction. I thought I might do it because my husband diverted himself with building. If I stayed from him any time he was dissatisfied, which sometimes happened. I set myself in a corner, and there had my work with me, but could scarce do any thing by reason of the force of the attraction, which made the work fall out of my hands. I passed whole hours this way, without being able either to open my

eyes or know what passed in me; but I had nothing to wish for, nor yet to be afraid of. Every where I found my proper centre, because every where I found God.

My heart could then desire nothing but what it had; for this disposition extinguished all its desires; and I sometimes said to myself, "What wantest thou? What fearest thou?" And I was surprised to find upon trial that I had nothing to desire and nothing to fear. Every place I was in was my proper place.

As I had not generally any time allowed me to pray, but with difficulty, I determined, as my husband would not allow me to rise till seven o'clock in the morning, not to disobey him; I got on my knees in my bed, which was in his chamber, on account of his illness, endeavouring to shew him in every thing my punctuality; I got up at four o'clock, and continued thus on my bed; while he thought I was asleep: but this affected my health, and particularly my eyes, which were still weak from the small-pox, it being only eight months since I had that distemper. I soon recovered from this complaint, and used all diligence, in attending and improving every opportunity of meeting with and obtaining the presence of God.

As we had not yet built the chapel, and were far from any church, I could not go to mass, without the permission of my husband. As we could not get the coach out of the court, without his hearing it, I fixed an agreement with the superior of the Recollects, who was a very devout man. He pretended to be going to say mass for somebody else, and sent a friar to apprize me of it. I was obliged to go out very early in the morning, that my husband might not perceive

it; and though I could scarce walk, I made a shift to hobble on foot a quarter of a league, as I durst not get the horses put to the coach, for fear of waking him. And really God wrought wonders for me to second my desire—I have never been deceived in my confidence in him. If I could particularly enumerate the remarkable providences, which were hereupon given in my favour, there would be enough to fill whole volumes.

M. Granger was the only person I could be free to lay open my condition to, when I could get to see her, which was with the greatest difficulty, and through providential assistance; having not only been forbidden by my confessor and my husband, but all means, that could be devised, having been put in practice by my mother-in-law to prevent it. I placed an extreme confidence in her. I concealed nothing from her, either of my sins or of my pains. I would not have done the least thing without telling it to her. I did not now practise any other austerities but those which she was willing to allow me to do. There was nothing which I kept from her but my interior dispositions, which I was scarce able to tell, because I knew not how to explain myself thereupon, being very ignorant of those things, having never read or heard of the like.

Under pretence of going to see my father, I ran off to see Mother Granger. This was discovered, and cost me such crosses as I cannot express; for it would be difficult to tell to what excess their rage ran against me. The difficulty of writing to her was no less: for as I had the utmost abhorrence of a lie, I forbade the footmen to tell any. When they were met they were asked whither they were going, and if they had

not any letters. My mother-in-law set herself in a little passage, through which none could go out without passing by her. She asked them whither they were going and what they carried. Sometimes going on foot to the Benedictines, I caused clean shoes to be carried [to put on at her return,] that they might not perceive I had been out. I durst not go alone; and those who attended me had orders to tell every place I went to. If they were discovered to fail in doing it, they were either corrected or turned out of their service.

My husband and mother-in-law were always inveighing against that good woman, though in reality they esteemed her. I sometimes made my own complaint to her; and she replied, "How should you content them, when I have been doing all I could for these twenty years to satisfy them without success?" For as my mother-in-law had two daughters with her, she was always finding something to say against every thing she did in regard to them.

But the most sensible cross to me now, was the revolting of my own son against me, whom they inspired with so great contempt for me, that I could not bear to see him without extreme affliction. When I was in my chamber with some of my friends they sent him to listen to what we said; and as he saw this pleased them, he invented a hundred things to tell them. What gave me the most pain at heart was the loss of my child. If I caught him in a lie, as frequently I did, he told me, "My grandmother says, you have been a greater liar than I." I answered him, "It is because I have been so, that I know the ugliness of that vice, and what a hard thing it is to get the better of it; and it is for this reason that I would

not have you suffer the like." He spoke to me things very offensive; and because he remarked the fear I stood in of his grandmother and his father, if in their absence I found fault with him in any thing, he insultingly upbraided me, and said, "That now I wanted to set up for his mistress, because they were not there." They approved of all this in such sort as to strengthen him in his worst inclinations. One day he went to see my father, and rashly began to talk against me to him, as he was used to do to his grandmother. But here it did not meet with the same reception. My father was so much grieved at it, as to shed tears; and came to our house to desire he might be corrected for it. Though they promised it should be done, they never did it. I was grievously afraid of the consequences of so bad an education. I told Mother Granger of it, who consoled me, and said, "That since I could not remedy it, I must suffer and leave every thing to God; and that this child would be my cross."

Another great cross was the difficulty I had in attending to my husband. I knew he was displeased when I was not with him; and when I was with him, he never exprest any pleasure in it, or at any thing I did. On the contrary, he only rejected with scorn whatever came to him from me. He was so very uneasy with me about every thing, that I sometimes trembled when I approached him. I could do nothing to his liking; and when I did not attend to him, he was angry. He had taken such a dislike to soups, that he could not bear the sight of them; and those that brought them had a rough reception, so that neither his mother nor any of the domesticks would carry them to him. There was none but I who did not

refuse that office. I went to carry them to him, and let his anger pass; and then tried in an agreeable way to introduce them to him. And when his passion increased, I waited with patience, after which I said to him, "I had rather be reprimanded several times a day, than cause you any harm, in not bringing you what is proper." Sometimes he took them; at other times pushed them back. But as he saw my perseverance, he would at length submit.

When he was a little better, and I was carrying something agreeable to him, then my mother-in-law would take it out of my hands, and carry it herself. And as he thought I was not so careful and tender of him, he would fly in a rage against me, and express great thankfulness to his mother. I silently suffered it all. I used all my skill and endeavours to gain my mother-in-law's favour by my assiduities, my presents, my services; but was not fortunate enough to succeed. How bitter and grievous, oh my God, would such a life be, were it not for thee? But thou sweetened and reconciled me to it.

CHAPTER XVIII.

About eight or nine months after my recovery from the small-pox, Father La Combe, passing by our house, brought me a letter from Father de la Motte.* After a short conversation we both desired a farther opportunity. I thought that he either loved God, or was disposed to love him. God had already made use of me for the conversion of

* He was a Bernabite, brother of Lady Guion, by the father: a malevolent, selfish ecclesiastic, as we shall see in the 2d and 3d Parts.

three of his order. The strong desire he had of seeing me again induced him to come to our country house. A little accident which happened to him opened a way for me to speak to him. As he was in discourse with my husband who liked him much, he was taken unwell, and retired into the garden. My husband bade me go and look after him, to see what was the matter with him. I went. He told me he had remarked in my countenance a deep inwardness and presence of God, which had given him a great desire to see me again; and God assisted me to open to him the interior path of the soul, and conveyed so much grace to him through this poor channel, that he has owned to me since, that he went away changed into quite another man. I preserved an esteem for him; for it appeared to me that he would be devoted to God; but I was at that time very far from foreseeing that ever I should go to the place of his residence.

My disposition at this time was a continual prayer for the presence of God, which was so plentifully given, that it seemed to be more in me than my very self. The sensibility thereof was so powerful, so penetrating, it seemed to me irresistible; and love took from me all liberty of my own. At other times I was so dry I felt nothing but the pain of absence, which was the harder to me, as the divine presence had been before the more sensible. In these alternatives, when love was present, I forgot in such a manner all my troubles and pains, that it appeared to me as if I never had any; and in its absence, it seemed as if it never would return to me again. I thought it was through some fault of mine it was retired; and that rendered me inconsolable. Had I known it had been

a condition through which it was necessary to pass, I should not have been troubled; for my strong love of the will of God would have rendered every thing easy to me: the property of this prayer being to give a great love to the order of God, with so sublime and perfect a reliance on him, as not to fear any thing, neither dangers, nor even death itself. It gives a great abstraction from one's self, one's own interests, one's own reputation, and an utter disregard to every thing of the kind; all being swallowed up in the one regard to the will of God. At home, I was accused of every thing that was ill done, spoiled or broken. At first I told the truth, and said it was not I. They then persisted, and accused me of lying. I then made no reply. Besides, they told all this to such as came to the house. When I was afterwards alone with the same persons, I never undeceived them. I often heard such things said of me, before my friends, as were enough to make them entertain a bad opinion of me. My mind kept its habitation in the tacit consciousness of my own innocence, not concerning myself whether they thought well or ill of me; excluding all the world, all opinions or censures, out of my view, and minding nothing else but the friendship of God alone.

If through infidelity I happened at any time to justify myself, it did not succeed, and drew upon me new crosses both within and without; but notwithstanding all that, I was so in love with the cross, that the greatest cross of all to me would have been to be without any. When the cross was taken from me for any short space, it seemed to me that it was because of the bad use I had made of it; and that infidelity had deprived me of so great an advantage;

for I never knew its value better than in its loss. Oh, dear cross, my faithful companion! As my Saviour became incarnate, only to die in thy arms, should not I be conformable to him in that; and wilt not thou be the means of uniting me to him forever? I often said to thee, O my Love, punish me any other way; but take not from me the cross. This amiable cross returned to me with so much the more force as my desire for it was more vehement. I could not reconcile two things, they appeared to me so very opposite; viz. To desire the cross with so much ardour, and to support it with so much pain.

God knows well, in the admirable economy he observes, how to render the crosses more weighty, conformable to the ability of the creature to bear them; giving always new ones, and such as one does not expect. Hereby my soul began to be more resigned, and to comprehend the state of absence, and of wanting what I longed for, to be more profitable than that of abounding; because this latter nourished *self-love*. If God did not act thus, the soul would never die to itself. The principle of *self-love* is so crafty and dangerous, that it fastens to every thing.

What gave me most uneasiness, in this time of darkness and crucifixion, both within and without, was an inconceivable readiness to be quick and hasty. When any answer a little too lively escaped me, which served not a little to humble me, they said, "I was fallen into a mortal sin." A conduct no less rigorous than this was quite necessary for me; for I was so proud, passionate, and of an humour naturally thwarting, wishing always to have my own way, and thinking my own reasons better than those of others; that, had thou, O my God! spared on me

the strokes of the hammer, thou would never have polished me to thy liking, to be an instrument for thy use. I was so vain, I was ridiculous for it. Applause rendered me insupportable. I had the fault of praising my friends to excess, and blaming others without reason: but the more criminal I have been, the more I am indebted to thee, and the less of any good can I attribute to myself. Oh, how blind are men who attribute to other men the holiness God puts in them! I believe, my God, that thou hast saints who, under thy grace, owe much to their own fidelity. As for me, I owe all to thee. I cannot acknowledge it too much.

In acts of charity I was very assiduous. So great was my tenderness for the poor, that I wished to have supplied all their wants, which I could not see without reproaching myself for the plenty I enjoyed. I deprived myself of all I could to help them. The very best I was helped to at table was immediately, by the order I had given, taken from me and carried to them. There were few of the poor where I lived who did not partake of my liberality. Being refused by others, they came to me. I said to thee, Oh my divine Love! "It is thy substance; I am only the steward of it. I ought to distribute it according to thy will." I found means to relieve them without letting myself be known, because I had one who distributed my alms privately. When there were families who were ashamed to take it in this way, I sent it to them as if I owed it. I clothed such as were naked, and caused young girls to be taught how to maintain themselves honourably, to the end that being employed, and having whereon to live, they might not be under a temptation to deviate

from the paths of rectitude and virtue. God made use of me to reclaim several from their disorderly lives; and one there was of quality and beauty who has since made a happy end. I went to visit the sick, to comfort them, to make their beds. I made ointments, dressed their wounds, buried their dead. I privately furnished artists and tradesmen wherewith to keep up their shops. My heart was much opened toward my fellow creatures in distress: and I think, hardly any one could carry charity much farther than our Lord made me do, according to my estate, both while married and since.

To purify me the more from the mixture I might make of his gifts with my own *self-love*, he gave me interior probations which were very heavy. I began to experience that virtue, which had been so easy and delightful to me, become an insupportable weight; not that I did not love it extremely, but I did not find myself in that noble practice of it, of which the view had been given me. The more I loved it, the more I laboured to acquire some virtue which I saw I wanted, and I thought I fell into what was contrary to it. My heart, indeed, was detached from all sensual pleasures. For these several years past, it has seemed to me that my mind is so absent from the body, that I do things as if I did them not.

CHAPTER XIX.

To resume the thread of my history, the small-pox had so much injured one of my eyes, that I was afraid I should lose it. I had a gland at the corner of the eye, which was loosened. An imposthume

arose from time to time, which gave me exquisite pain till it was lanced. It swelled all my head to that degree that I could not bear even a pillow. The least noise was a punishment, though sometimes they made a great one in my chamber; and yet this was a good time to me for two reasons, the first, because I was mostly left alone, enjoying a sweet retreat without interruption; the other, because it answered the desire which I had after suffering: which desire was so great, that all the austerities of the body would have been but as a drop of water to quench so great a fire.* Let others bless themselves in their ease or gaiety, grandeur or pleasures, poor temporary heavens: as for me my desires were all turned another way, even to the silent path of suffering for Christ, and to be united to him, through the mortification of all that was of nature in me, that my senses, appetites and will, being dead to these, migh wholly live in him.

I asked, and obtained leave to go to Paris for the cure of my eye: and yet it was not in reality for that, so much as to see Monsieur Bertot, whom Mother Granger had lately assigned to me for my director, who was a man of great experience. I then went to take leave of my father, who embraced me with great tenderness, neither of us then thinking it would be the last time.

Paris was no more a place for me to fear. The throngs only served the more to draw me into a deep recollection, and the noise of the streets augmented my inward prayer. I saw Monsieur Bertot, who did not

* Here she mentions more of bodily austerities which she inflicted on herself.

prove of that service to me which he would have done if I had then had the gift of explaining myself, but though I wished earnestly to hide nothing from him, yet God held me so close to himself, that I could tell him scarce any thing at all. As soon as I spoke to him, every thing was taken out of my mind, so that I could remember nothing but some few faults which I told him: as I saw him very seldom, as nothing stayed in my mind, and as I read of nothing any way resembling my case, I knew not how to open myself upon it. Beside I desired to make nothing known, but the evil which was in me. Therefore Monsieur Bertot knew me not till after his death. This was of great utility to me, for taking away every support, and making me die to myself.

I went to pass the ten days, from the ascension to pentecost or whitsuntide, at an Abbey four leagues from Paris, the Abbess of which had a particular friendship for me. Here my union with God seemed to be constant and continual, becoming always more simple, but at the same time more close and intimate.

On the day of St. Erasmus, patron of that monastery, I awaked suddenly at four o'clock in the morning, with a strong impression on my mind, that my father was dead: and though at that time my soul was in a very great contentment, yet my love for him affected it with sorrow, and my body with weakness. Under the strokes and daily troubles which befell me, my will was so subservient to thine, oh my God, that there seemed to be no will left in me but thine only. My own will disappeared, and no desires, tendencies or inclinations left, but to the one sole object of whatever was most pleasing to thee, be it what it would. If I

had a will, it appeared to me that it was with thine like two well tuned lutes in concert: that which is not touched renders the same sound as that which is touched: it is but one and the same sound, one pure harmony. It is this union of the will which establishes in perfect peace. Yet though my own will was lost, as to its operations, I have found since, in the strange conditions I have been obliged to pass through, how much it had yet to cost me to have it totally lost as to all its properties in all the circumstances, and whole extent thereof, in order that the soul should retain no more any interest or desire of its own, of either time or eternity, but only the interest of God alone, in the manner that is known to himself, and not in our way of conceiving. How many souls are there which think their own wills quite lost, while they are yet very far from it! They would find they still subsist, if they met with hard probations. Who is there who does not wish something for himself, either of interest, wealth, honour, pleasure, conveniency, liberty, &c.? And he who thinks his mind loose from all these objects, because he possesses them, would, soon perceive his attachment to them, were he stripped of those he is possessed of. As I am not mistress of what I write, I follow not any order; but it is of little consequence.

In the afternoon as I was with the Abbess, I told her I had strong presentiments of my father's death. Indeed I could hardly speak, I was so affected within, and enfeebled without. Presently came one to tell her that she was wanted in the parlour. It was a man who had rode post, and was come express, with an account that my father was fallen ill. And as it held him only twelve hours, he was therefore by this

time dead. The Abbess returning, said, "Here is a letter from your husband, who writes that your father is taken violently ill." I said to her, "He is dead, I cannot have a doubt about it." I sent away to Paris immediately, to hire a hackney coach to go the sooner. Mine waited for me at the midway. I went off at nine o'clock at night. They said, "I was going to destroy myself." I had nobody of my acquaintance with me; for I had sent away my maid to Paris, to put every thing in order there; and being in a religious house, I had no mind to keep any footman with me. The Abbess told me, "that since I thought my father was dead, it would be rashness in me to expose myself, and run the risque of my life in that manner; that coaches could hardly pass the way I was going, it being no beaten road." I answered, "that it was my indispensable duty to go to succour my father, and that I ought not, on a bare apprehension, to exempt myself from it." I went then alone, abandoned to providence, with people unknown. My weakness was so great, that I could hardly keep my seat in the coach, and was forced often to get out, on account of dangerous places in the road.

In this way was I obliged, about midnight, to cross a forest, noted for murders and robberies committed there. The boldest person dreaded it; my resignation left me scarce any room to think at all about it. Oh how many fears and vexations does a resigned soul spare itself! Thus all alone I went to within five leagues of my own habitation, where, when I arrived, I found my confessor with one of my relations who was waiting for me. The sweet consolation I had enjoyed, when alone, was now in-

terrupted. My confessor, ignorant of my condition, treated it with contempt, and allowed me not any liberty. My grief was of such a nature that I could not shed a tear. And I was ashamed to hear a thing which I knew but too well, without, giving any exterior mark of grief. The condition I was in did not permit me to speak, or to do such things as are usually expected from persons of piety. I could do nothing else but love and keep silence.

I found on my arrival at home, that my father was buried, on account of the excessive heat. It was ten o'clock at night. All wore the habit of mourning. I had travelled thirty leagues in a day and a night. As I was very weak, not having taken any nourishment, I immediately retired to rest.

About two o'clock in the morning my husband arose, and having gone out of my chamber, he returned presently, crying aloud, "My daughter is dead." She was my only daughter, as dearly beloved as truly lovely. She had so many graces both of body and mind conferred on her, that one must have been insensible not to have loved her. She had an extraordinary share of love to God. Often was she found in corners at prayer. She was several times corrected by her grandmother, because she said, "She would never have any other husband but our Lord," yet could she never make her say otherwise. She was innocent and modest as a little angel; very dutiful and endearing, and withal very beautiful. Her father doated on her, and to me she was very dear, much more for the qualities of her mind than those of her body. I looked upon her as my only consolation on earth: for she had as much of affection for me, as her brother of aversion and con-

tempt. She died of an unseasonable bleeding: but what shall I say? she died by the hands of him who was pleased for wise reasons of his own, to strip me of all.

There now remained to me only the son of my sorrow. He fell ill to the point of death, but was again restored. I no more wept for my child than for my father. I could only say, "Thou oh Lord gave her to me; it pleases thee to take her back again, for she was thine." As for my father, his virtue was so generally known, and there would be so many things to say of him, that I must rather be silent, than enter upon the subject. His reliance on God, his faith and patience were wonderful. He was the scourge of heresy and innovations. My father and daughter died in the month of July 1672. From henceforth crosses were not spared me: and though I have had abundance of them hitherto, yet they were only the shadows of those which I have been since obliged to pass through, pursuant to a marriage covenant, which I had newly entered into with our Lord Jesus Christ. In this spiritual marriage I claimed for my dowry only crosses, scourges, persecutions, ignominies, lowliness, nothingness of self, which in his great goodness, and for wise ends, as I have seen, he has been pleased to confer on me.*

On the day of the Virgin's Assumption in the

* She writes that Mother Granger had drawn up this covenant for her, and sent it to her on Magdalen's eve, to be devoutly signed by her in form.

On this she writes, "It seemed to me then that God made of me his living temple, and consecrated me to himself, sealed me with the sign of the cross, the mark he sets on his faithful followers, as St. John shews in his Revelations. Chap. vii. 3."

same year 1672, being in great distress, on account of the redoubling of outward and inward crosses, I went into my closet to give vent to my grief. M. Bertot, my director when at Paris, was brought into my mind, with this wish, *Oh that he was sensible of what I suffer!* Though he wrote but very seldom, and with great difficulty, yet he wrote me a letter dated the same day about the cross, the finest and most consolatory he ever wrote me on that subject. Sometimes my spirit was so oppressed with continual crosses, which scarce gave me any relaxation, that when alone my eyes turned every way, to see if they could find any thing to give some relief. A word, a sigh, a trifle, or to know that any one took part in my grief, would have been some comfort; but that was not granted me, not even to look toward heaven, or make any complaint. Love held me then so close, that it would have this miserable nature to perish, without giving it any support or nourishment. Oh my dearest Lord! thou yet gave my soul a victorious support, which made it triumph over all the weaknesses of *nature*, and took thy knife in thy hand to destroy *it* without relaxation. And yet this nature is so perverse, and so full of artifices to save itself alive, that at last it took the course of nourishing itself with its own despair, and with its fidelity under such heavy and continual oppression, and withal sought to conceal the value it attributed thereto: but thy eyes, oh my divine Love, were too penetrating not to discover the subtilty. Wherefore, thou, oh my Shepherd, changed thy conduct toward it. Thou sometimes comforted it with *thy crook and thy staff*; that is to say by thy conduct as loving as it was crucifying; but it was only to re-

duce it to the last extremities, as I shall shew in the sequel.

CHAPTER XX.

A LADY, whom I was used sometimes to visit, governess of our town, had taken a particular liking to me, because (as she was pleased to say) my person and manners were agreeable to her. She would sometimes tell me that she observed in me something extraordinary and uncommon. I believe the inward attraction of my soul appeared on my very countenance: for one day a gentleman of fashion said to my husband's aunt, "I saw the Lady your niece; and it is very visible that she does not lose the presence of God." Which, being related to me, surprised me greatly, little thinking that such an one as he knew what it was to have God thus present. This lady, I say, began to be touched with the sense of God: for wishing once to take me to the play, I refused to go; as I never did go to it, making use of the pretext of my husband's continual indispositions. She pressed me exceedingly, and said, "I should not suffer them to hinder me from taking some diversion; and that I was not of an age to be confined like a nurse." I told her what reasons I had for acting so. She then perceived that it was more from a principle of piety than the indispositions of my husband, that I did not go. Insisting to know my sentiments of plays, I told her, "I entirely disapproved of them, and especially for christian women:" and as she was far more advanced in years than I was, what I then said made such an impression on her mind, that she never after went to the play.

Being once with her, and another lady fond of talking, one who had read the fathers, they spoke much of God. This lady spoke learnedly of him. I said scarce any thing, being inwardly drawn to silence, and troubled at such kind of talk of him. The lady my acquaintance, came next day to see me, "God had so touched her heart, that she could stand out no longer." I attributed this touch to something the other lady had spoken: but she said to me, "Your silence had something in it which penetrated to the bottom of my soul; and I could not relish what the other said." Then we spoke to each other with open hearts.

It was then, oh my God, that thou entered into the bottom of her soul, never more to retire. She continued so hungry after thee, as to be scarce able to bear the mention of any thing beside. As thou would have her wholly thine, at the end of three months thou removed from her a most affectionate and beloved husband. Thou sent her such trying crosses, and at the same time such an abundance of thy grace, as to become thereby the absolute master of her heart. After the death of her husband, and the loss of most of her fortune, she went to reside four leagues from our house, on a small estate, which yet remained to her. She obtained my husband's consent to my going to pass a week with her, to console her under her losses. God gave her all she wanted. She had a great share of understanding, but was surprised at my expressing things to her so far above my natural capacity. I should have been surprised at it myself, had I reflected on it; but it was God who gave me them for her sake, diffusing a flood of grace into her soul, without regarding the

unworthiness of the channel he was pleased to make use of. Since that time her soul has been the temple of the Holy-Ghost, and our hearts have been united with a band never to be dissolved.

My husband and I took a little journey together, in which both my resignation and humiliation were exercised, without costing me any thing; divine grace was my powerful support. We had like to have all perished in a river: the rest of the company in a great fright threw themselves out of the coach, which sunk in the moving sand. I continued so much inwardly occupied, that I did not once think of the danger. God delivered me from it, without my thought of avoiding it. I was quite easy to leave myself to be drowned, had he permitted it. It may be said, "I was rash;" I believe I was so: yet I rather chose to perish, trusting in God, than make my escape in a dependence on myself. But what say I? We do not perish, but for want of trusting in him. My pleasure is to be indebted to him for every thing. This renders me content in my miseries, which I would rather keep all my life long, in a state of resignation to him, than put an end to them, in a dependence on myself. However I would not advise others to act thus, unless they were in the same disposition which at that time I was in.

As my husband's maladies daily increased; he resolved to go to St. Reine, (the holy queen, or blessed virgin) for whom he had a great devotion; he appeared very desirous of having none but me with him, and told me one day, "If they never spoke to me against you, I should be more easy, and you more happy." In this journey I committed many faults of *self-love*, and *self-seeking*; and yet being in a deep

interior resignation, I had reason enough to experience what I should be without thy fatherly care, oh my God. For some time past, thou hadst withdrawn from me that sweet interior correspondence which before I had only to follow. I was become like a poor traveller that had lost his way in the night, and could find no way, path, or track: but as I reserve for another place the description of the terrible darkness through which I passed, I shall here continue the thread of my history. I had now no other child, except my first-born son, who was often at the gates of death; but soon after this period, gave birth to another son. During the time of my confinement, I enjoyed great inward consolation. But how dear did this happy time cost me, since it was only a preparative to a total privation of several years, without any support, or hope of return! It began with the death of one who had been my only consolation after God. This was Mother Granger. Before my return from St. Reine I heard she was dead. She died in a lethargy; and as they spoke to her about me, with a design to awake her, she answered, "I have always loved her in God, and for God;" and spoke no more.

When I received this news, I confess it was to me the most sensibly afflicting stroke I had ever yet felt. I thought, had I been with her at her death, I might have spoken to her, and received her last instructions: but God has so ordered it that I have been absent in almost all my losses, in order to render the strokes the more painful. Some months indeed before her death I had such a sight of it, that though I could not see her but with extreme difficulty, and suffering for it, she was a support to me: yet the Lord let me know that it would be a benefit for me

to be deprived of her; but at the time she died this was not present with me. It was in that trying season when my paths were stopped, and the very ground turned up, that she was taken from me, who might have guided me in my lonesome and difficult road; all covered as it was with precipices, and entangled with briars and thorns.

Oh conduct all adorable of my God! There must be no guide for the person whom he is leading into the regions of darkness and death; no conductor for the man whom he is determined to destroy, (*i. e.* to cause to die totally to himself.) After having saved me with so much mercy, O my Love; after having led me by the hand in rugged paths, it seems thou had determined on my destruction. May it not be said that thou dost not save but to destroy, nor go to seek the lost sheep, but to cause it to be yet more lost; that thou art pleased in building what is demolished, and in demolishing what is built.—Oh secrets of the incomprehensible wisdom of God, unknown to any beside himself!—Yet men, sprung up only of a few days, wish to penetrate and to set bounds to it. Who is he that hath known the mind of the Lord, or who hath been his counsellor? It is a wisdom only to be known through death to every thing, and through the entire loss of all self.

My brother now openly shewed his hatred for me. He married at Orleans, and my husband had the complaisance to go to his marriage, though he was in a poor state of health, the roads bad, and covered with snow. And yet far from acknowledging it, my brother quarrelled with him more than ever, and without any reason too; and I was the butt of both their resentments. While I was at Orleans, meeting with

a Jesuit, whom at that time I thought highly of, I was too forward and free in speaking to him of spiritual things, thinking I was doing well, but had a remorse for it afterwards; which I so remembered, that I no more fell into the like fault. How often does one mistake nature for grace! One must be dead to one's self, when such forwardness is from God only.

At my coming away my brother treated me with the utmost contempt: yet, on the road, my mind was so much drawn inward, that though we had much more danger than in going, I had no thought about myself, but only about my husband; so that seeing the coach overturning, I said, "Fear not, it is on my side that it falls; it will not hurt you." I believe, had all perished, I should not have been moved, my peace was so profound, that nothing could shake it. If these times continued, we should be too strong. But they now began to come but seldom, and to be followed with long and wearisome privations. Though since that time my brother is changed for the better, and has turned on the side of God, yet he has never turned for me. It is a particular permission of God, and the conduct of his providence over my soul, which has caused him, and other religious persons, who have persecuted me, to think they were rendering glory to God, and doing actions of justice therein. And indeed what greater justice than that all creatures should be treacherous to me, and declare against me, who have too many times been treacherous to God.

After this there fell out a very perplexing affair. To me it caused great crosses. There was a certain person who had conceived so much malice against

my husband; that he was determined by any means to ruin him if possible. He found no other way to do it, but by entering into a private agreement with my brother; by which he obtained a power to demand in the name of Monsieur, the king's brother, two hundred thousand livres, which he pretended to make appear that my brother and I were indebted to him. My brother signed the processes, upon an assurance given him that he should not pay any thing. I think his youth engaged him in what he did not understand. This affair so chagrined my husband, and with reason too, that I have room to believe it shortened his days. He was so angry at me, though I was innocent, that he could not speak to me but with rage. He would give me no light into the affair, and I did not know in what it consisted. In the height of his rage, he said he would not meddle in it, but give me up my portion, and let me live as I could; with many other things still more harsh. On the other side my brother would not stir in it, nor suffer it to be done. The day when the trial was to come on, there were several of the judges, who were both judges and parties. After mass I felt myself strongly pressed to go to them. I was wonderfully assisted herein, even so as to discover and unravel all the turns and artifices of this affair, without knowing how I could have been able to do it. The first judge was so surprised to see the affair so very different from what he had thought of it before, that he himself exhorted me to go to the other judges, and especially to the intendant, who was just then going to court, and was quite misinformed about it. God enabled me to manifest the truth in so clear a light, and gave such force to my words thereupon, that the intendant thanked

me for having so seasonably come to undeceive him. Had not I done this, he assured me the affair had been lost. And as they saw the falsehood of every article, they would have condemned the plaintiff to pay the costs, if it had not been so great a prince, who lent his name to the officers that deceived him. To save the honour of the prince, they ordered us to pay him fifty crowns. Hereby the two hundred thousand livres were reduced to only one hundred and fifty. My husband was exceedingly pleased with what I had done: but my brother appeared outrageous against me, to such a degree, that had I caused him some very great loss, he could scarce have been more so. Thus moderately at once ended an affair, which before had looked so frightful.

CHAPTER XXI.

About this time I fell into a state of total privation which continued near seven years. I seemed to myself cast down, as it were, from the throne of God, like Nebuchadnezzar, to live among beasts; a deplorable state, yet of the greatest advantage to me, by the use which divine Wisdom made of it. This state of emptiness, darkness, and inability to do good, went far beyond any trials I had ever yet met with. I have experienced since that the prayer of the heart, when it appears most dry and ineffectual, is yet not offered in vain. For God gives what is best for us, though not what we wish. Oh, were people but convinced of this truth; far from complaining all their life long, they would employ it only in making use, even in death and a crucified faithful-

ness, of the situation God brings them into. Hence, by causing us death they would procure us life; for it is a wonderful thing, as all our happiness, spiritual, temporal and eternal, consists in resigning ourselves to God, leaving it to him to do in us and with us as he pleases, and with so much the more submission, as things please us less; how, by this pure dependence on his spirit, every thing is given us; and in the hand of God every thing profits us admirably: our very weaknesses, in his hand, prove a source of humiliation. If the soul were faithful to leave itself in the hand of God, sustaining all his operations whether gratifying or mortifying, suffering itself to be conducted, from moment to moment, by his hand, and destroyed by the strokes of his Providence, without complaining, or wanting any thing but what it has; it would soon arrive at the experience of the eternal truth, though it might not know till late the ways and methods of conduct used by God over it.

But the misfortune is, that people wish to direct God, instead of resigning themselves to be directed by him. They want to shew him a way, instead of passively following that which he casts up for them. And from hence many souls, called to enjoy God himself, and not barely his gifts, pass all their lives in running after little consolations, and feeding on them; resting there, and making all their happiness to consist therein.

For you, my dear children, if my chains and my imprisonment have any place with you, I pray that they may serve to engage you to seek nothing but God for himself, and never to desire to possess him but by the death of your whole selves; never to seek to be something in the ways of the spirit, but chuse ye to enter into the most profound nothingness.

I could not pray. Heaven was shut up for me, and I thought justly. I could get no consolation, nor make any complaint thereupon: nor had I any creature on earth to apply to, or impart my condition to. I found myself banished from all beings, without finding a support or refuge in any thing. I could no more practise any virtue; such as had been familiar to me seemed now to have left me. "Oh, *said I*, is it possible that this heart, formerly all on fire, should be now become like ice!" I often thought all creatures combined against me. Laden with a weight of past sins, and a multitude of new ones, I could not think God would ever pardon me, but looked on myself as a victim designed for the regions of the wicked. I would have been glad to do penances, to make use of prayers, pilgrimages and vows: but still whatever I tried for a remedy seemed only to increase the malady. I may say that tears were my drink, and sorrow my food. I felt in myself such a pain as I never could bring any to comprehend, but such as have experienced it. I had within myself an executioner who tortured me without respite. Even when I went to church, I could not stay there: at mass, I could give no attention to it; it was now of no service to me. I scarce conceived or understood any thing at it, or about it. Heretofore, I had endured pain with pleasure, and rejoiced at the sight of danger; but now a little of the former irritated me, and the shadow of the latter threw me into a fright.

CHAPTER XXII.

As my husband drew near his end, his disorders had no intermission. No sooner was he in appearance recovered from one complaint, than he fell into another. He bore great pains with much patience, offering them to God, and making a good use of them: yet his dislike of me increased, because injurious reports respecting me were multiplied to him, and those about him did nothing but irritate him, and his pains rendered him the more susceptible of such impressions. At this time the maid, who had used to torment me, sometimes took pity on me. She came to me as soon as I was gone into my closet, and said, "Come to master, that your mother-in-law may not speak to him any more against you." I pretended to be ignorant of it all; but he could not conceal his displeasure, nor even suffer me near him. My mother-in-law at the same time kept no measure. All who came to the house were witnesses of the continual scoldings, which I was forced to bear, and which I bore with much patience, notwithstanding my being in the condition I have mentioned.

My husband having, some time before his death, finished the building of the chapel in the country, where we spent a part of the summer, I had the conveniency of hearing mass every day, and of receiving the communion; but not daring to do it openly every day, the priest privately kept a host; and as soon as the people were gone out, he admitted me to the communion. They solemnized the

dedication of this little chapel, and though I had already begun to enter into the condition I have described, yet when they began to bless it, I felt myself all on a sudden inwardly seized; which continued all the time of the ceremony, when our Lord made a new consecration of me to himself. I then seemed to myself a temple consecrated to him, both for time, and for eternity, and said in myself, "May this temple never be profaned, (speaking both of the one and the other.) May the praises of my God be sung therein for ever!" It seemed to me at that time as if my prayer was granted. But soon was all this taken from me, and not so much as any remembrance thereof left to console me.

When I was at our country house, before this chapel was built, I retired for prayer to woods and caverns. How many times, here, has God preserved me from dangerous and venemous beasts! sometimes at unawares, I kneeled upon serpents, which were there in great plenty, and they fled away without doing me any harm. If I could recount all the providences of God in my favour, it would appear wonderful: they were indeed so frequent and so continual, that I could not but be astonished at them. God everlastingly gives to such as have nothing wherewith to repay him. If there appears in the creature any fidelity or patience, it is he alone who gives it: if he ceases, for an instant, to support; if he seem to leave me to myself, I cease to be strong, and find myself weaker than any other creature. If my miseries shew what I am, his favours shew what he is, and the extreme necessity I am under of ever depending on him. But in writing I am frequently apt to wander.

At last, after having passed twelve years and four months in the crosses of marriage, as great as possible, except poverty which I never knew, though I had much desired it, God drew me out of that state (after the manner I am going to relate,) to give me still stronger crosses to bear, and of such a nature as I had never met with before: for if you give attention, sir, to the life which you have ordered me to write, you will remark that my crosses have been increasing till the present time, I only coming out of one to enter into another still heavier. Amidst the great troubles imposed upon me, when they said, "I was in a mortal sin," I had nobody in the world to speak to. I could have wished to have had somebody for a witness of my conduct; but I had not any. I had no support, no confessor, no director, no friend, no counsellor. I had lost all: and after God had taken from me one after another, he withdrew also himself. I remained without any creature; and to complete my distress, I seemed to be left without God, who alone could support me in such a deeply trying state.

As to my husband, his illness grew every day more obstinate. He apprehended the approach of death, and even wished for it, so oppressive was the languishing life he dragged on. To his other ills was added so great a dislike to every kind of nourishment, that he did not take things necessary to sustain life. There was none but myself who had the courage to get him to receive what little he did take. The doctor advised him to go into the country. There for a few days at first he seemed to be better, but he was suddenly taken more unwell. His patience increased with his pain. I saw plainly he

could not live long. It was a great trouble to me, that my mother-in-law kept me from him as much as she could, and infused into him such a displeasure toward me, that I was much afraid lest he should die in it. I took a little interval of time, when she happened not to be with him, and drawing near his bed, I kneeled down and said to him, "That if ever I had done any thing that displeased him I begged his pardon, assuring him it had not been voluntary." He appeared very much affected; and as he was just come out of a sound sleep, he said to me, "It is I who beg your pardon. I did not deserve you." After this time he was not only pleased to see me, but gave me advice what I should do after his death, not to depend on the people on whom I now depend. He was for eight days very resigned and patient, though, on account of a prevailing gangrene, he was cut and slashed with the strokes of a lancet. I went to Paris for a skilful surgeon; but when he arrived my husband was dead. It was in the morning of the 21st of July 1676, that he expired.

No mortal could die in a more christian disposition, or with more courage than he did, after having received all his sacraments in a manner truly edifying. I was not present when he expired; for out of tenderness he had made me retire. And he was above twenty hours without sense, in the agonies of death. Thou ordered, oh my God, that he should die on Magdalen's eve, to shew me that I was to be wholly thine. I renewed every year, on Magdalen's day, the marriage covenant which I had made with thee, my Lord; and I found myself at that time free to renew it, and that in good earnest. After this

renewal I was filled with great interior joy, which was so much the more new to me, as for a long time past I had been plunged in bitterness.

As soon as I heard that my husband had just expired, I said to thee, oh my God, "Thou hast broken my bonds, and I will offer to thee a sacrifice of praise." After that I remained in a deep silence, both exterior and interior, quite dry and without any support. I could neither weep nor speak. My mother-in-law said very fine things, and was much commended for it by every one. They were offended at my silence, which they attributed to want of resignation. A friar told me, that every one admired the fine acts which my mother-in-law did; that as for me, they heard me say nothing; that I must sacrifice my loss to God; but I could not say one single word, whatever effort I made for it.

I was indeed very much spent; for though I was but lately delivered of a daughter, yet I attended and sat up with my husband four and twenty nights before his death. I was more than a year after, in recovering from the fatigue, joined to my sore weakness and pains both of body and mind. The depression, or dryness and stupidity which I was in, was such, that I could not say a word about God; it bore me down in such a manner, that I could scarcely speak. However I entered for some moments into the admiration of thy goodness, oh my God, who had rendered me free, exactly on the day that I had taken thee for my spouse. I saw well that my crosses would not cease, since my mother-in-law had survived my husband. Also I was still tied, in having two children given me in so short a time before my husband's death; which has evidently appeared

the effect of divine wisdom; for had I had only my eldest son, I should have put him to the college, and then gone into the convent of the Benedictines, and so stolen myself from the designs of God upon me.

I was willing to shew the esteem I had for my husband, in causing the most magnificent funeral to be made for him, at my own expence, that had ever been seen in that country. I paid off the legacies he had left. My mother-in-law violently opposed every thing I could do for securing my own interests. I had nobody to apply to for advice or help; for my brother would not give me the least assistance. I was ignorant of affairs: but God, who, independent of my natural understanding, had always made me fit for every thing that pleased him, supplied me with such a perfect intelligence herein, that I succeeded. I omitted not the least punctilio, and was surprised that in these matters I should know every thing without ever having learned. I digested all my papers, and regulated all my affairs, without the least assistance of any one. My husband had abundance of writings deposited in his hands. I took an exact inventory of them, and sent them severally to their owners, which, without divine assistance, would have been very difficult for me; because, my husband having been a long time sick, every thing was in the greatest confusion. This gained me the reputation of a skilful woman, as well as another affair which occurred.

A great number of persons, who had been at law for several years, applied to my husband to settle their affairs. Though it was not properly the business of a gentleman, yet they applied to him, because he had both understanding and probity; and

as he had a love for several of them he consented. There were twenty actions one upon another, and in all twenty-two persons concerned, who could not get any end put to their differences, by reason of new incidents continually falling out. My husband charged himself with getting lawyers to examine their papers, but died before he could make any procedure therein. After his death I sent for them to give them their papers; but they would not receive them, begging of me that I would accommodate them, and prevent their ruin. It appeared to me as ridiculous as impossible to undertake an affair of so great consequence, and which would require so long a discussion: nevertheless, relying on the strength and wisdom of God, I followed the movement he gave me to consent thereto. I shut myself up about thirty days in my closet, for all these affairs, without ever going out but to mass and meals. The arbitration being at length prepared, they all signed it without seeing it. They were all so well satisfied therewith, that they could not forbear publishing it every where. It was God alone who did these things; for when I had no more to do with affairs, I knew nothing about them.

My friends, and persons of the greatest distinction in the country, now came to advise me to remove from my mother-in-law: for though I never complained of her, every one knew her humour. I answered that I should account it my place and duty to stay with her, if she would permit me. The view that was given me was not to go from the cross. Wherefore I resolved not only not to leave my mother-in-law, but also not to put away the girl I have spoken of.

I hope, sir, you will excuse me for writing in so

little order. I cannot do otherwise, on account of so many different things I have to mention, which I can only recite as they present themselves.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THIS chapter is only a detail of her interior hardships and sufferings during the time of total privation, as also great part of the 24, 25, 26, and 27th chapters, in which the like accounts often recur. The abridged account given in the 21st, may suffice on this head; yet all such particulars, as appear worthy of fresh notice in these chapters, I intend to recite in their proper order.—TRANSLATOR.

CHAPTER XXIV.

BEING now a widow, my crosses, which one would have thought should have abated, increased. The turbulent domestic I have so often mentioned, instead of growing milder, now she depended on me, became more furious than ever. In our house she had scraped up a handsome sum, and I settled on her, besides, an annuity for the remainder of her life, for the services she had done my husband. She swelled with vanity and haughtiness. Having been used to sit up so much with an invalid, she had taken to drink wine, to keep up her spirits. It had now passed into a habit. As she grew aged and weak, a little of it got into her head. I endeavoured to hide this fault; but it grew to that height that it could not be concealed. I spoke of it to her confessor, in order that

he might try, by mild means, to reclaim her from it; but instead of profiting by her director's advice, she was outrageous against me. My mother-in-law, who could hardly bear that fault, and had often spoken to me about it, now joined her, in reproaching me, and vindicating her. This strange creature, when any company came, would cry out with all her might, "that I had dishonoured her, thrown her into despair, and would be the cause of her eternal destruction, as I was taking the ready course to my own:" yet at this time God gave me an unbounded patience. I answered only with mildness and charity all her passionate invectives, giving her besides every possible mark of my affection. If any other maid came to wait on me, she drew her back in a rage, crying out, that "I hated her on account of the affection with which she had served my husband." When she had not a mind to come, I was obliged to serve myself alone; and when she did come, it was to chide and make a noise. When I was very unwell, as often was the case, then this girl would appear to be in despair. From hence I thought it was from thee, oh my Lord, that all this came upon me; for, without thy permission, she was scarce capable of such an unaccountable conduct. She seemed not sensible of any faults, but always to think herself in the right. All the persons whom thou hast made use of to cause me to suffer, thought they were rendering service to thee in so doing.

I went to Paris on purpose to see Monsieur Bertot, who had been of very little service to me as a director. Not knowing my state, and I incapable of telling it to him, he grew weary of the charge. At length he threw it up, and wrote to me to take an-

other director. I made no doubt but God had revealed to him my wicked state; and that desertion of me seemed a most certain mark of my reprobation. This was during the life of my husband. But now my renewed solicitations, and his sympathy with me on my husband's death, prevailed on him to resume my direction, which to me still proved of very little service. I went to Paris on purpose to see him. When there, I went several times to him, without being able to tell him any thing of my condition: but I told him that I wanted some ecclesiastic to educate my son, to rid him of his bad habits, and of the wrong impressions he had conceived against me. He found for me a priest, of whom he had received very good testimonies.

I went to make a retreat with M. Bertot, and Mad. de C. He spoke to me all the time no more than half a quarter of an hour at most. As he saw that I said nothing to him, as indeed I knew not what to say, as I had not spoken to him of the favours which the Lord had conferred on me; (not from a desire to conceal them, but because the Lord did not permit me to do it, as he had over me only the designs of death,) he therefore spoke to such as he looked upon to be more advanced in grace, and let me alone as one for whom there was nothing to be done. So well did God hide from him the condition of my soul, in order to make me suffer; that he wanted to refer me to certain considerations, thinking I had not the spirit of prayer, and that Mother Granger was mistaken in me when she told him I had. I did what I could to obey him, but to me it was entirely impossible. On this account I was displeased with myself, because I believed M. Bertot

rather than my own experience. Through this whole retreat my inclination, which I discerned only by the resistance I made to it, was to rest in silence and nakedness of thoughts; but in the settling of my mind therein I feared I was disobeying the orders of my director: and this made me think that I was decayed and fallen off from grace. I kept myself in my state of nothingness, content with my poor low degree of prayer, without envying the higher one of others, which I judged myself unworthy of. I would have however desired much to do the will of God, and to advance more to please him, but despaired altogether of ever attaining that desirable end.

There was, in the place where I lived, one whose doctrine was suspected of *. He possessed a dignity in the church, which obliged me to have a deference for him. As he presently understood the opposition which I entertained for all such as were suspected of unsoundness in the faith, and supposed that I had some credit in that place, he used his utmost efforts to engage me in his sentiments. I answered him with so much clearness and energy, that he had not a word to reply. This increased his desire to win me over, and in order to it to contract a friendship with me. He continued to importune me two years and a half. As he was very polite, of an obliging temper, and had a good share of wit, I did not mistrust him, but even conceived a hope of his conversion, in which I found myself mistaken. I then ceased going near him. He came to enquire why he could see me no more. At that time he was so agreeable to my sick husband, in his assiduities about him, that I could not avoid his conversation; though

* Most probably of Jansenism.

I thought the shortest and best way for me would be to break off all acquaintance with him. Therefore after the death of my husband, as M. Bertot would not permit me to do it before, I did it: and when he saw that he could not renew it, he raised up strong persecutions against me, and stirred up those of his party.

These gentlemen had at that time a method amongst them, by which they soon knew who were of their party, and who were opposite. They sent to one another circular letters, by means of which, in a very little time, they cried me down on every side, after a very strange manner. Yet this gave me little trouble. I was glad of my new liberty, intending never again to enter into an intimacy with any one which it would give me so much difficulty to break off.

The inability I was now in of doing those exterior acts of charity I had done before, served this person with a pretext to publish that it was owing to him, that I had formerly done them; and that, having broken off from him, I now quitted them. Willing to ascribe to himself the merit of what God alone, by his grace, had made me do, he went so far as to preach of me publickly, as one who had been a bright pattern to the town, but was now become a scandal to it. Several times he preached very offensive things. And though I was present at those sermons, and they were enough to weigh me down with confusion, for they offended all that heard them; I could not be troubled at it, for I carried in myself my own condemnation beyond utterance. I thought I merited abundantly worse than all he could say against me, and that, if all men knew me, they would trample

me under their feet. My reputation then was blasted by the industry of this ecclesiastic: and now it was only who could offer me the greatest insults, as he caused all such as passed for persons of piety to declare against me. I thought he and they were in the right, and therefore quietly bore it all. Confused, like a criminal that dares not lift up his eyes, I looked upon the virtue of others with respect. I saw no fault in others, and no virtue in myself. When any happened to praise me, it was like a heavy blow struck at me, and I said in myself, "They little know my miseries, and from what state I am fallen." When any blamed me, I agreed to that, as right and just. Nature wanted sometimes to get out of such an abject condition, but could not find any way: and if I tried to make an outward appearance of righteousness, by the practice of some good thing, my heart in secret rebuked me as guilty of hypocrisy, in wanting to appear what I was not; and God did not permit that to succeed. Oh, how excellent are the crosses of Providence! All other crosses are of no value.

I was often very ill, and in danger of death, and knew not what to do to prepare myself for it. Several persons of piety, who had been acquainted with me, wrote to me about those things which the gentlemen (above hinted at) spread about me, and I did not offer to justify myself, though I knew myself innocent of the things whereof they accused me. One day being in the greatest desolation and distress, I opened the New Testament, and chanced to meet with these words, "My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness:" which for a little time gave me some relief.

CHAPTER XXV.

My God took from me all the sensibility which I had for the creatures, or things created, even in an instant, as one takes off a robe, in such manner that after that time I had none for any whatever. Though he had done me that favour, for which I can never sufficiently testify my gratitude; I was however from it neither more contented nor less confused. My God seemed to be so far from me, and so much displeased with me, that there remained to me nothing else but the grief of having lost his blessed presence through my fault. The loss of my reputation every day increasing, by means of the party of that gentleman I have mentioned, became more sensible to my heart, though I was not allowed to justify or bewail myself.

As I became always more impotent for every kind of exterior works, as I could not go to see the poor, nor stay at church, nor practise prayer, and as I became colder towards God, in proportion as I was more sensible of my wrong steps, all this destroyed me the more both in my own eyes and in those of others. There were in the mean time some very considerable gentlemen who addressed me, and even such persons as according to the rules of fashion ought not to think of me. They presented themselves, during the very depth of my outward and inward desolation. At first it appeared to me a means of drawing me out of the vexation I was in. But it seemed to me then, notwithstanding my pains of body and mind, that if a king had presented himself to me, I should have refused him with pleasure,

to shew thee, oh my God, that with all my miseries I was resolved to be thine alone: and that if thou would not accept of me, I would at least have the consolation of having been faithful to thee, in all that depended on me. For as to my inward condition I never mentioned it to any body: I never spoke hereof, nor of those who addressed me, though my mother-in-law would say, "If I did not marry, it was because none would have me." It was sufficient for me that thou, oh my God, knew that I sacrificed them to thee (without saying a word of it to any body) especially one whose high birth and exterior qualities might have tempted both my vanity and inclination. Oh could I but have hoped, through those sacrifices and heavy afflictions I underwent, to be agreeable to thee, such hope would have been for me like a change from hell to heaven. But so far was I from presuming to hope for it, that I feared a sea of afflictions to be followed by everlasting torment, in the loss of thee, who alone could put an end to my maladies, which all the creatures could only render more violent. I durst not desire to enjoy thee. I only desired not to offend thee.

I was for five or six weeks at the last extremity. I could not take any nourishment. A spoonful of broth made me faint. My voice was so gone, that my words could not be distinguished. I could see no hopes of salvation, yet could not be unwilling to die, as I bore a strong impression that the longer I should live the more I should sin. Of the two I thought I rather chose hell than sin. All the good, which God made me do, now seemed to me evil, and full of faults. All my prayers, penances, alms and charities, seemed to rise up against me, to height-

en my condemnation. I thought there appeared both on the side of God, on my own, and from all creatures, one general condemnation. My conscience was a witness against me, which I could not appease; and what will appear strange, the sins of my youth did not then give me any pain at all. Instead of their rising up in judgement against me, it appeared one universal testimony against all the good I had done, and all the sentiments of evil I had entertained. If I went to confessors, I could tell them nothing of my condition; and if I could have told them it, they could not have understood it. They would have regarded as eminent virtues, what, oh my God, thy eyes all pure and chaste rejected as infidelity. It was then that I felt the truth of what thou hast said, that *thou judgest our righteousness.* Oh how chaste art thou! Who can comprehend it? It was then that I turned my eyes on every side, to see what way succour might come to me; but my succour could come no way but from him who made heaven and earth. As I saw there was for me no safety, or spiritual health in myself, I entered into a secret complacency in seeing no good in myself, whereon to rest and to presume on my salvation. The nearer my perdition appeared to me, the more I found in God himself (all displeased as to me he appeared) wherewith to augment my trust and confidence. It seemed to me that I had in Jesus Christ all that was wanting in myself. Oh, Holy Jesus! I was *that lost sheep of the house of Israel, whom thou wast come to save:* thou wast come to save her who could find no salvation out of thee. Oh ye stout and righteous men! Observe as much as ye please of excellence in what ye have done to the glory of

God. As for me, I only glory in my infirmities, since they have merited for me such a Saviour.

All my troubles, joined to the loss of my reputation, which yet was not so great as I apprehended, (it being only amongst a party) rendered me so unable to take nourishment, that it seemed wonderful how I lived. In four days I did not eat as much as would make one very moderate repast. I was obliged to keep my bed, through pure weakness, my body being no longer able to support the burden laid upon it. If I had thought, known, or heard tell, that there had ever been such a state as mine, it would have exceedingly relieved me: but to me my very pain appeared to be sin. Spiritual books, when I tried to read them, all contributed only to augment it; for I saw in myself none of those degrees which they set down. I did not so much as comprehend them. And when they treated of the pains of certain states, I was very far from attributing any of them to myself. I said to myself, "These persons feel pains which God operates:" but as to me, I sin, and feel nothing but my own wicked state. I could have wished to separate the sin from the confusion of sin; and provided I had not offended God, all would have been easy to me.

See here a slight portrait of my last miseries which I am glad to let you know, because in their beginning I omitted many infidelities, having had too much of an earnest attachment, vain complaisance, discourses which were long, and in the main but unprofitable, through self-love; and nature made a sort of necessity for them; but toward the latter part I could not have borne a speech too human, nor the least thing of the kind. God by an apparent evil purified me

from the real evil. Might not I then well sing with the church, "Oh happy sin, which has gained for me such a Redeemer!"

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE first religious person whom God made use of to draw me to himself, to whom (according to his desire) I wrote from time to time, wrote to me in the depth of my distress, desiring me to write to him no more, signifying his disapprobation of what came from me, and that I displeased God greatly. A father, a Jesuit, who had esteemed me much, wrote to me in like manner. I thanked them for their charity, and commended myself to their prayers. It was then so indifferent to me to be decried of every body, even of the greatest saints, that it added but little to my pain. The pain of displeasing God, and the strong draught I felt in myself to all kinds of faults, caused still my most lively and sensible pain.

I had been accustomed from the beginning to dryness and to privation. I even preferred it to the state of abounding, because I knew that I must seek God above all. I had even at the first beginnings, an instinct in the innermost of my soul to pass over every manner of thing whatsoever, and to leave the gifts, to run after the Giver. But at this time my spirit and senses were in such a manner struck by thy permission, oh my God, who wast pleased to destroy me without mercy, that the farther I went, the more every thing appeared to me a sin; even crosses appeared to me no more crosses but real faults. I thought I drew them all on myself by my imprudent words and actions. I was like those who, looking in a co-

loured glass, behold every thing of the same colour with which it is overspread. If I had been able to do any exterior good thing, or penances for my evil, it would have relieved me; but, beside that I was forbidden to do the latter, I feared it so much, and felt in myself so great a weakness, as made it appear impossible for me to do it, I looked at it with horrour, so weak I found myself now for any thing of the kind.

Methinks I omit many things, both of providences of God in my favour, and of rugged paths through which I was obliged to pass; but as I have but one general view, I leave them in the knowledge of God only. Afterwards, being forsaken of my director, the coldness I remarked in the persons conducted by him, toward me, gave me no more trouble, nor indeed that of all the creatures, on account of my inward humiliation. My brother also joined those who exclaimed against me, though he had never seen them before. I believe it was God who conducted things this way; for my brother has virtue, and undoubtedly thought he did well in acting thus.

I was obliged to go about some business to a town where some near relations of my mother-in-law lived. How did I find things changed there! When I was there before, they entertained me in a most elegant and obliging manner, regaling me from house to house with emulation: but now they treated me with the utmost contempt, saying, they did it to revenge what I made their relation suffer. As I saw the thing went so far, and that notwithstanding all my care and endeavours to please her, I had not been able to succeed, I resolved to come to an explanation with her. I told her, "that there was a current report that I treated her ill, though I made it all my study to give her

marks of my esteem. If the report was true, I desired her to allow me to remove from her; for that I would not chuse to stay to give her pain, but only with a quite contrary view." She answered very coldly, "I might do what I would; for she had not spoken about it, but was resolved to live apart from me." This was fairly giving me my discharge, and I thought of taking my measures privately to retire. As I had not, since my widowhood, made any visits but such as were of pure necessity, or of charity, there were found too many discontented spirits, who made a party with her against me; while God required of me an inviolable secrecy on all my pains, both exterior and interior. There is nothing which makes nature die so much, as to find neither support nor consolation. In short I saw myself obliged to go out, in the middle of winter, with my children and my daughter's nurse. At that time there was no house empty in the town. The Benedictines offered me an apartment in theirs.

I was now in a great straight; on one side fearing lest I was shunning the cross, on the other side, thinking it unreasonable to impose my stay on one to whom it was only painful. Beside what I have before related of her carriage, which still continued; when I went into the country to take a little repose, she complained that I left her alone. If I desired her to come thither she would not. If I said, "I durst not ask her to come, for fear of incommoding her, by changing her bed," she replied, "It was only an excuse, because I would not have her to go; and that I only went to be away from her." When I heard that she was displeased at my being in the country, I returned to the town. Then she could not

bear to speak to me, or to see me. I accosted her without appearing to notice her manner of conducting herself toward me; but instead of making me any answer, she turned her head another way. I often sent her my coach, desiring her to come and spend a day in the country. She sent it back empty, without any answer. If I passed some days there without sending it, she complained aloud. In short, all I did to please her soured her, God so permitting it; for she had a good heart, but was troubled with an uneasy temper: and I do not fail to think myself under much obligation to her.

Being with her on Christmas day, I said to her with much affection, "My mother, on this day was the King of *peace* born, to bring *it* to us. I beg *peace* of you in his name." I think that touched her, though she would not let it appear. The Ecclesiastic, whom I had with me at home, far from strengthening and comforting me, did nothing but weaken and afflict me, telling me that I ought not to suffer certain things. I had not credit enough to discharge any domestic, however defective or culpable. As soon as any of them were warned to go away, she sided with them, and all her friends interfered in it. As I was ready to go off, one of my mother-in-law's friends, a man of worth, who had always an esteem for me, without daring to shew it, having heard it, was much afraid lest I should leave the town; for the removal of my alms, he thought, would be a loss to the country. He resolved to speak to my mother-in-law, in the softest manner he could; for he knew her. After he had spoken to her, she said, "She would not put me away, but if I would go she would not hinder me." After this he came to see me, and

desired me to go and make an excuse to her, in order to content her. I told him, "I should be willing to make a hundred, though I did not know about what; that I did it continually about every thing, which made her uneasy. But that was not now the matter, for I made no complaint of her, but thought it not proper for me to continue with her, to give her pain; that it was but just that I should contribute to her ease." However he went with me into her room. Then I told her "That I begged her pardon, if ever I had displeased her in any thing, that it had never been my intention to do it, that I desired her, before this gentleman, who was her friend, to tell me wherein I had given her any offence." Here God permitted, that she made a declaration of the truth in his presence. She said, "She was not a person to suffer herself to be offended; that she had no other complaint against me but that I did not love her, and wished her dead." I answered her, "That these thoughts were far from my heart, so far from it, that I should be glad, by my best care and attendance on her, to prolong her days; that my affection was real, but that she never would be persuaded to believe it, whatever testimonies I could give, so long as she hearkened to people who spoke to her against me; that she had with her a maid who, far from shewing me any respect, treated me ill, so far as to push me when she wanted to pass by: she had done it at church; making me give way to her with as much violence as contempt, several times also in my chamber, grating me with her words; that I had never complained of it, but was now willing to apprize her of it, because such a temper might one day give her trouble." She took the girl's part: nevertheless we embraced each other, and it was left so. Soon after,

when I was in the country, this maid, not having me to vent her chagrins on, behaved in such a manner to my mother-in-law, as she could not bear. In consequence of this she immediately put her out of doors. I must say here on my mother-in-law's behalf, that she had both sense and virtue, and except certain faults, which persons who do not practise prayer are liable to, she had good qualities. Perhaps I caused crosses to her without intending it, and she to me without knowing it. I hope what I write will not be seen by any who may be offended with it, or who may not be in a condition of seeing the things in God.

The gentleman who had used me so ill, for breaking off my acquaintance with him, among his penitents had one who for affairs which befell her husband, was obliged to quit the country. He himself was not only accused of the same things of which he had so liberally and unjustly accused me, but of still greater offences. Though I well knew all this, God granted me the favour never to make his downfall the subject of my discourse; never to open my lips about it. On the contrary, when any spoke to me of it, I pitied him, and said what I could in mitigation of his case. And God governed my heart so well, that it never offered to go into any vain joy at seeing him overtaken, and opprest, with the evil which he had been so assiduous in endeavouring to bring upon me. And though I knew that my mother-in-law was informed of it all, I never spoke to her about it. I did not lay hold of the opportunity to mention any thing of the wrong he had done me. I only answered her in a few words without blaming him; as God required of me such a silence about my crosses, for more than sixteen years, that it would be difficult to find one which was more universal.

CHAPTER XXVII.

ONE day, laden with sorrow, and not knowing what to do, I wished to speak to a person of distinction and merit, who came into the country, and passed for a very inward man. I wrote to request an opportunity with him, as I wanted his advice: but soon after, I felt remorse for it; and this voice sprung up in my heart, "What, dost thou thus seek for ease, and to shake off my yoke?" Hereupon I instantly wrote again to desire him to excuse me, adding, "That what I had written was only from *self-love*; and not necessity; that as he knew what it was to be faithful to God, I hoped he would not disapprove my acting with this christian simplicity:" yet he resented it, which surprised me, as I had conceived a high idea of his virtue. Virtues he has, but such as are lively, and unacquainted with the paths of death. Thou, oh my God, hast been my faithful conductor, even in these paths, as with admiration I have discovered since they are past. Blessed be thy Name for ever. I am obliged to bear this testimony to thy goodness. I must, before I continue my narration, deliver one remark which the Lord caused me to make of the way by which he, in his goodness, was pleased to conduct me; which is, that this obscure path is the surest to mortify the soul, as it leaves it not any prop to lean upon for support. Though it has no application to any particular state of Jesus Christ: yet, at its coming out, it finds itself clothed with all his dispositions and divine states, having truly put on Christ. Before impure

and selfish, it is hereby purified, as gold in the furnace. Before, full of its own judgment, and its own will, it now obeys like a child, and finds no other will in itself. Before, it would have contested for a trifle: now it yields at first, not with pain, but as it were naturally. Its own views are vanished. It now loves nothing but poverty, littleness and humiliation. It preferred itself before every body, now every body before itself, having an immense charity for its neighbour, to bear with his faults and weaknesses, in order to win him by love, which before it could not do but with very great reluctance. The rage of the wolf is changed to the meekness of the lamb.

During all the time of my trial, I went after no fine sights or recreations. When others went I stayed at home, I wanted to see and know nothing but Jesus Christ. My closet was my only diversion. Even when the queen was near me, whom I had never seen, and whom I had desire enough to see; I had only to open my eyes, and look out, to see her; yet did not do it. I had been fond of hearing others sing: and yet I was once four days with one whose voice passed for the finest in the world, without ever desiring her to sing; which surprised her, because she was not ignorant that, knowing her name, I must know the charming excellence of her voice. However I committed some infidelities in inquiring what others said of me by way of blame. I met with one who told me every thing. And though I shewed nothing of it, it served only to mortify me, as I saw I was yet too much alive to self, and that *self-love* and nature had put me upon this inquiry.

I should never be able to express the number of my miseries; but they are so vastly surmounted by

the favours of God, and so swallowed up in these that I can see them no more. One of the things which gave me the most pain the seven years I have spoken of, especially the five last, was so strange a force of my imagination that it did not give me any rest. My senses bore it company in such sort that I could no more shut my eyes at church: and thus having all the gates and avenues open, I was like a vineyard exposed, because the hedges, which the father of the family had planted were torn away. I saw then every one that came and went out, and every thing that passed in the church. The same force, which had drawn me inward to recollection, seemed to push me outward to dissipation.

Laden with miseries of all kinds, weighed down with oppressions, crushed under crosses, I thought of nothing else but ending my days thus. There did not remain to me the least hope of ever coming out of so painful a condition: but however, thinking I had lost grace forever, and the salvation which it merits for us, I wished at least to do what I could for God, whom I feared I should never love; and seeing the happy state from whence I had fallen, I wished in gratitude to serve him, though I looked on myself as a victim destined for hell. The view of such a happy state used formerly to cause secret desires to rise in my heart of returning to it; but now I was so suddenly thrown back into the depth of the abyss from whence I could not utter a sigh; I judged myself to be in a state which was due to unfaithful souls. It seemed, oh my God, that I was forever cast off from thy regard, and from that of all creatures. By degrees my state ceased to be painful. I became even insensible to it, and my insensibility

looked like the final hardening of my reprobation. My coldness appeared to me a mortal coldness. Happy for me, oh my God, it was that thou thus made me die, in order to live in thee, and in thy precious love, as I am going to relate.

To resume then my history, it fell out that a servant of mine wanted to become a Bernabite. I wrote about it to Father de la Mothe, who wrote back to me, that I must address Father la Combe, who was then the superior of the Bernabites of Tonon. This obliged me to write to him. I had always preserved a secret respect and esteem for him as one under grace. I was glad of this opportunity of recommending myself to his prayers. I wrote to him about my fall from the grace of God, and that I had requited his favours with the blackest ingratitude; that I was miserable, and a subject worthy of compassion; and that, far from having advanced towards God, I was become entirely alienated from him. He answered me in such a manner, as if he had known, by a supernatural light, notwithstanding the frightful description I had given of myself, that my condition was of grace. And so he wrote to me, though I could not then at all believe it to be so.

Now Geneva came into my mind, after a singular manner, which caused me many fears. I said to myself, "What, to complete thy reprobation, wouldst thou go to that excess of impiety, to quit the faith through apostasy? (The inhabitants of Geneva being generally Protestants or Calvanists.) Could I then ever quit the church, for which I would give a thousand lives? Or, shall I ever depart from that faith, which I would even wish to seal with my blood?" I had such a distrust of myself, that I durst

hope for nothing, but had a thousand reasons for fear, after the experience I had had of my weakness. Nevertheless the letter, which I had received from Father la Combe, in which he wrote me an account of his present disposition, somewhat similar to mine, had such an effect, as to restore peace and calmness to my mind. I felt myself inwardly united to him, as to a person of great fidelity to the grace of God. Afterwards a woman appeared to me in a dream to be come down from Heaven, to tell me that God demanded me at Geneva.*

About eight or ten days before Magdalen's day, 1680, it came into my mind to write to father la Combe, and to desire him, if he received my letter before that day to say mass for me. It was so ordered, contrary to the usual custom, that he received my letter on St. Magdalen's eve, and next day said mass for me. It was said to him, thrice over, with much force, "Ye shall both dwell in one and the same place." I believe, oh my God, that this has been much more verified, both in our inward sense and experience, and in the same crucifying adventures which have befallen us, pretty much alike; and in thy Self, who art our dwelling, than in any temporal abode: for, though I have been for some time in the

* The city of Geneva stands at the west end of the famous lake of Geneva, or lake Lemain, a lake sixty miles long and twelve miles wide. It resembles the sea in the colour of its waters and the storms raised in it. In the summer the melted snow runs into it from the Alps, the highest mountains in Europe, which are all round it. The river Rhone, which springs from the Alps, runs through this lake by Geneva, Lyons, &c. It brings with it a vast quantity of water when the snows melt. Then both the lakes and the rivers of Switzerland are much higher than in winter.

same country with him, and thy providence has furnished us with some opportunities of being together, yet it appears to me, that it is much more verified in the former, as we both have had the like experience of Jesus Christ crucified.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

It was on that happy Magdalen's day that my soul was perfectly delivered from all it's pains. It had already begun since the receipt of the first letter from Father La Combe, to recover a new life: it was then indeed only like that of a dead person raised, though not yet unbound from his grave-clothes: but on this day I was, as it were, in perfect life, and set at perfect liberty. I then found myself as much raised above nature as before I had been depressed under its weights. I was inexpressibly overjoyed to see returned to me with as much magnificence as purity, him whom I thought I had lost for ever. It was then, oh my God, that I found again in thee with new advantages, after a manner ineffable, all I had been deprived of; and the peace I now possessed was all holy and heavenly: yet the remembrance of my past misery brought a fear upon me, lest nature should find means to take to itself any part therein. As soon as it wanted to see or taste any thing, the spirit ever watchful crossed and repelled it. I was far from elevating myself then, or attributing to myself any thing of this new state: for my experience made me sensible what I was.

I hoped I should enjoy this happy state for some time, but did not think my happiness so great and

immutable as it was. If one judge of a good by the trouble which precedes it, I leave mine to be judged of, by the sorrows I had been obliged to undergo before my coming to it. The Apostle Paul tells us, that "the sufferings of this life are not to be compared with the glory that is prepared for us." That is true even of this life. One day of this happiness was worth more than many years of suffering. It was indeed at that time well worth all I had undergone. Though it was then only dawning, an alacrity for doing good was restored to me, greater than ever before. It seemed to be all quiet, free and natural to me. At the beginning this liberty had less extent; but the more I advanced the greater it grew. I had occasion to see Mon. Bertot for a few moments, and just told him I thought my state much changed, having scarce time to tell him any more. He seeming attentive to something else, answered, "No." I believed him; for grace taught me to prefer the judgment of others, and rather believe them than my own sentiments or experience. This did not give me any trouble; for every state seemed equally indifferent so I had the favour of God. I felt a kind of beatitude, every day increasing in me. I did all kinds of good without selfishness, or demanding any kind of return for it. Whenever a thought of the kind presented, it was instantly rejected, and as it were a curtain in the soul drawn before it. My imagination was kept so fixed, that I had now very little trouble on that head. I wondered at the clearness and purity of my whole heart.

I received a letter from Father la Combe, wherein he wrote that God had given him a sense that he had great designs in regard to me, "Let them be,

then said I to myself, either of justice or mercy, all is equal to me." I still had Geneva deeply at heart; but said nothing of it to any body, waiting for God to make known to me his all-powerful will; and fearing lest any stratagem of the devil might be concealed therein, that might tend to draw me out of my proper place, or steal me out of my condition. The more I saw of my own misery, incapacity and nothingness; and that they rendered me the fitter for the designs of God, whatever they might be, I said, "Oh my Lord, take the weak and the wretched to do thy works, that thou mayest have all the glory of them, and that man may attribute nothing of them to himself. If thou took a person of eminence and great talents, one might attribute to him something thereof: but if thou takest me, it will be manifest that thou alone art the author of whatever good shall be done." I continued quiet in my spirit, leaving the whole affair to God, being satisfied, if he should require any thing of me, that he would furnish me with the means of performing it. I held myself in readiness with a full resolution to execute his orders, when he should make them known, though it were to the laying down of my life. I resumed my care of the sick, and dressing of wounds. And God caused me to cure the most incurable. When surgeons could do no more, or were going to cut off limbs, it was then that God enabled me to cure them.

Oh the joy that accompanied me every where, finding still, in his own immensity and boundless power, him who had united me to himself! Oh how really did I experience what he said in the Gospel, by the four Evangelists, and by one of them twice over, "Whosoever will lose his life for my

sake shall find it; and whosoever will save his life shall lose it."

When I had lost all created supports, and even divine ones, I then found myself happily necessitated to fall into the pure divine, and to fall into it, through all that which seemed to remove me further from it. In losing all the gifts, with all their supports, I found the Giver. Oh poor creatures, who pass along all your time in feeding on the gifts of God, and think therein to be the most favoured and happy, how I pity you if ye stop here, short of the true rest, and cease to go forward to God, through the resignation of the same gifts! How many pass all their lives this way, and think highly of themselves therein! There are others, who being designed of God to die to themselves, yet pass all their time in a dying life, and in inward agonies, without ever entering into God through death and total loss; because they are always willing to retain something under plausible pretexts, and so never lose *self* to the whole extent of the designs of God. Wherefore they never enjoy God in his fullness; which is a loss that will not perfectly be known till another life.

Oh my Lord, what happiness did not I largely taste in my solitude, and with my little family, where nothing interrupted my tranquility! As I was in the country, and the slender age of my children did not require my application too much, they being in good hands, I retired a great part of the day into a wood, where I passed as many days of happiness as I had had months of sorrow. Thou, oh my God, dealt by me as by thy servant Job, rendering me double for all thou hadst taken from me, and delivering me from all my crosses. Thou gave me a marvellous fa-

cility to satisfy every one. What was surprising now, was that my mother-in-law, who till then had ever been complaining of me, without my doing any thing more than usual to please her, declared none could be better satisfied with me than she was. Such as before had cried me down the most, now testified their sorrow for it, and became my panegyrists. My reputation was established with the more advantage, as before it had appeared to be lost. I remained in an entire peace, as well without as within. It seemed to me that my soul was become like that new *Jerusalem*, spoken of in the *Apocalypse*, *prepared as a bride for her husband, and where there is no more sorrow, or sighing*. I had a perfect indifference to every thing that is here, and an union so great with the good will of God, that my own will seemed to be lost. My soul could not incline itself on one side or the other, since another will had taken place of its own, but only nourish itself with the daily providences of God. It now found a will all divine, which yet was so peculiar and natural to it, that it found itself infinitely more free in this than ever it had been in its own.

These dispositions have still subsisted, and still grown stronger, and more perfect till this hour. I could neither desire one thing nor another, but was content with whatever fell out, without making any reflection thereupon, or giving any attention thereto, except when any in the house asked me, "Will you have this, or that?" And then I was surprised to find that there was nothing left in me which could desire or chuse. I was as if every thing, of smaller matters, quite disappeared, a higher power having taken up and filled all their room. I even perceived no more that soul which he had formerly conducted by

his crook and his staff, because now he alone appeared to me, my soul having given up its place to him. It seemed to me, as if it was wholly and altogether passed into its God, to make but one and the same thing with him; even as a little drop of water, cast into the sea, receives the qualities of the same sea. Oh union of unity, demanded of God by Jesus Christ for men, and merited by the same Jesus Christ! How strong is this in a soul that is become lost in its God! After the consummation of this divine unity, the soul remains *hid with* Christ *in* God. This happy loss is not like those transient ones, which ecstasy operates, after which the soul finds itself again.

CHAPTER XXIX.

I WAS obliged to go to Paris about some business. Having entered into a church that was very dark, to confess, I went to the first confessor I found, whom I did not know, nor have ever seen since. I made my confession simply, which was very short; but to the confessor himself I said not a word. He surprised me much in saying to me, "I know not who you are, whether maid, wife or widow; but I feel a strong inward motion to exhort you to do what the Lord has made known to you, that he requires of you. I have nothing else to say to you." I answered him, "My father, I am a widow who have little children of four and six years of age. What else could God require of me, but to take due care of them in their education?" He replied, "I know nothing further. You know if God has manifested to you that he requires something of you; and if

that is the case, there is nothing in the world which ought to hinder you. One must leave one's children to do that." This surprised me much. However, I told him nothing of what I felt for Geneva. I disposed myself submissively to quit every thing if God required it of me; and should, by his divine Providence, cause any occasion to rise for my so doing. I did not look upon it as a good I aspired to, or a virtue I hoped to acquire, or as any thing extraordinary, or as an act that would merit some return on God's part; but only gave myself up to be led in the way of my duty, whatever it might be.

As I was in this disposition, being in my family in the greatest tranquility, a religious man of the order of St. Dominic, one of my friends, had a great desire to go on a mission to Siam. He lived twenty leagues from my house. As he was ready to make a vow to this purpose, he found a stop in himself thereto, and a direction to come to speak to me. He came immediately, and as he had some reluctance to declare it to me, he went to say mass in my chapel, hoping God would be satisfied with his making the vow, as he was celebrating mass in my hearing: but he was stopped again. Whereupon he left the chapel to come to speak to me. He then told me his intention.

Though I had no thought of saying any thing positive to him on that head, I felt an impression in my soul to relate to him my case, and the thought I had had of a long time past for Geneva. I told him a dream I had had, which had appeared to me supernatural, which had reference hereto: and when I had done, I felt a strong motion to say to him, "You must not go to Siam. You must serve me in this affair. It is

for that end God has sent you hither ; I desire you to give me your advice." After three days, having considered the matter, and consulted God in it, he told me that he believed I was to go thither ; but to be better assured of it, it would be needful to see the Bishop of Geneva ; that if he approved of my design, it would be a sign that it was from God ; if not, I must drop it. I fell in with his sentiment. He then offered to go to Annecy,* to speak to the Bishop, and to bring me a faithful account of what they should agree on together. As he was advanced in years, we were deliberating what way he could take so long a journey, when there came two travellers, who told us the Bishop was at Paris. This I looked on as a miracle of God's providence. He advised me to write to Father la Combe, and to recommend the affair to his prayers, as he was then in that country. He then spoke to the bishop at Paris ; and I, having occasion to go thither, spoke to him also.

I told him, " that my design was to go into the country, to employ there my substance, to erect an establishment for all such as should be willing truly to serve God, and to give themselves unto him without reserve ; and that many of the servants of God had encouraged me thereto." The bishop approved of that design. He said, " there were new catholicks going to establish themselves at Gex,† and that it was a providential thing." I answered him, " that I had no vocation for Gex but for Geneva." He said, " I might go from thence to that city."

* Annecy, a city situate on a lake of the same name, 20 miles south of Geneva. In this city was the residence of the bishop of Geneva.

† Gex, a town of France, seven miles north-west of Geneva.

I thought this was a way which divine Providence had opened, for my taking this journey with the less difficulty. And as I yet knew nothing positive of what God would require at my hand, I was not willing to oppose any thing. "Who knows, said I, but the will of God is only that I should contribute to this establishment ?"

I went to see the prioress of the new catholicks at Paris. She manifested to me a great deal of joy, and assured me she would gladly join me. As she is a great servant of God, this confirmed me : for when I could reflect a little, which was but seldom, I thought God would make choice of her for her virtue, and of me for my worldly substance ; for when I inadvertently looked at myself, I could not think God would make use of me : but when I saw the things in God, then I saw that the more I was nothing, the fitter I was for his designs. As I saw nothing in myself extraordinary, as I looked on myself in the lowest stage of perfection, and imagined that an extraordinary degree of inspiration was necessary for extraordinary designs, this made me hesitate and fear deception. I did not yet sufficiently comprehend, that to follow, step by step, the guidance of divine Providence was the greatest and purest light. It was not that I was in fear of any thing, for my perfection and salvation, which I had referred to God ; but I was afraid of not doing his will, through wanting to do it too much. I went to consult father Claude Martin. At that time he gave me no decisive answer, demanding more time for praying about it ; telling me he would write to me what should appear to him to be the will of God concerning me.

I had some difficulty to speak to M. Bertot, both on account of his being difficult of access and of my knowing how much he condemned things extraordinary, or out of the common road, beside his never having given me the least help in regard to my inward condition: yet, being my director, I submitted, against my own views or judgment, to what he said, laying down all my own experiences when duty required me to believe and obey. I thought, however, that in an affair of this importance, I ought to address myself to him, and prefer his sense of the matter to that of every one beside, persuaded he would infallibly tell me the will of God. I went to him then, and he told me that my design was of God, and that he had a sense given him of God for some time past, that he required something of me. I therefore returned home to set every thing in order. I loved my children much, having had great satisfaction in being with them, but resigned all to God to follow his will.*

At my return from Paris, I left myself in his hands, resolved not to take any step either to make the thing succeed or to hinder it, either to advance or retard it, but singly to move as he should be pleased to direct me. I had mysterious dreams, which portended nothing but crosses, persecutions and afflictions. My heart submitted to whatever it should please God to ordain. I had one which was very significant.

Being employed in some necessary work, I saw near me a little animal which appeared to be dead.

* Divers other circumstances she recites, and providential signs concurring to confirm her herein, of which those here given, and those which follow, I thought sufficient; and that it might be tedious to the reader to go through every minute particular.—*Translator.*

This animal I took to be the envy of some persons, which seemed to have been dead for some time. I I took it up; and as I saw it strove hard to bite me, and that it magnified to the view of the eye, I cast it away; but found thereupon that it had filled my fingers with sharp pointed prickles like needles. I came to one of my acquaintance to get him to take them out; but he pushed them deeper in and left me so, till a charitable priest of great merit (whose countenance is still present with me, though I have not yet seen him, but believe I shall before I die) took this animal up with a pair of pincers. As soon as he held it fast, those sharp prickles fell off of themselves. Then I found that I easily entered into a place, which before had seemed inaccessible. And though the mire was up to my girdle, in my way to a deserted church, I went over it, without getting any dirt. It will be easy to see in the sequel what this signified.

Doubtless you will wonder that I, who make so little account of things extraordinary, relate dreams. I do it for two reasons; first, out of fidelity, having promised to omit nothing of what should come into my mind: secondly, because it is the method which God [sometimes] makes use of to communicate himself to faithful souls, to give them foretokens of things to come, which concern them. Thus mysterious dreams are found in many places of the holy scriptures. They have singular properties, as

1st, To leave a certainty that they are mysterious, and will have their effect in their season;

2d, To be hardly ever effaced out of the memory, though one forgets all others;

3d, To redouble the certainty of their truth every time one thinks of them; and

4th, They generally leave a certain unction, a divine sense or savour at one's waking. I received letters from sundry religious persons, some of whom lived far from me and from one another, relating to my going forth in the service of God, and some of them to Geneva in particular, in such a manner as surprised me. One of them intimated that I must there bear the cross and be persecuted; and another of them that I should be eyes to the blind, feet to the lame, and arms to the maimed.

The ecclesiastic, or chaplain, of our house was much afraid lest I was under a delusion: but what at that time greatly confirmed me was that father Claude Martin, whom I mentioned above, wrote to me that, after many prayers, God had given him to know that he required me at Geneva, and to make a free sacrifice of every thing to him. I answered him, "that perhaps God required of me nothing more than a sum of money to assist in a foundation which was going to be established there." He replied, that God had made him know that he wanted not my worldly substance but myself. At the very same time with this letter I received one from father la Combe, who wrote to me that God had given him a certainty, as he had done to several of his good and faithful servants and hand-maids, that he wanted me at Geneva. The writers of these two letters lived above a hundred and fifty leagues from each other; and yet both wrote the same thing. I could not but be somewhat surprised to receive at the same time two letters so exactly alike, from two persons living so far distant from each other.

As soon as I became fully convinced of its being the will of God, and saw nothing on earth capable of

detaining me, my senses had some pain about leaving my children. And upon reflecting thereon a doubt seized my mind. Oh my God! Had I rested on myself, or on the creatures, I should have revolted; and, as we read in the scriptures, *leaned on a broken reed which would have pierced my hand.* But relying on thee alone, what needed I to fear? I resolved then to go as a fool, regardless of the censures of such as understand not what it is to be a servant of God, and to receive and obey his orders. I firmly believed that he, by his Providence, would furnish the means necessary for the education of my children; and that in pure faith. I put every thing by degrees in order, God alone being my guide. In the mean time I caused several masses to be said, and devotions on all sides to be made. I gave offerings to a church dedicated to the holy Virgin, to obtain the favour of doing the will of God, and very great alms to procure that of knowing it.

CHAPTER XXX.

It seemed to me that by the favours which God had bestowed upon me, to make me quit every thing, he made my chains the stronger, and my separation the more blamable; for none could receive stronger marks of affection from an own mother than those which I received at this time from my mother-in-law, not only in health; but even the least sickness which befell me made her very uneasy: she said, "She had a veneration for my virtue." I believe what contributed not a little to this change was, that that she had heard from one or another, that three

persons had offered suit to me; and that I refused them, though they were of a quality above mine, with other advantages. She remembered how she had upbraided me on this head, and I answered her not a word, whereby I might have let her know that it depended only on myself to marry to advantage. She began to fear lest so rigorous a treatment as she had used toward me, might draw me to deliver myself by such means, with honour from her tyranny; and was sensible what damage that might be to my children. So she was now very tender to me on every occasion. I fell extremely ill. I thought that God accepted of my willingness of sacrifice with that of my life: during this illness my mother-in-law went not from my bed side. The tears she shed shewed the sincerity of her affection. I was very much affected at it, and thought I loved her as my true mother. How then should I leave her now, being so far advanced in age? The maid, who till then had been my plague, took an inconceivable friendship for me. She praised me every where, saying, "I was a true saint," (though I was far from it.) She served me with extraordinary respect, and begged pardon for all she had made me suffer. She died of grief after my departure.

There was a priest of merit, an inward man, who had fallen in with a temptation of taking on him an employ which I was sensible God did not call him to, and therefore, fearing it would be a snare to him, I advised him against it. He joined with the person from whom I broke off my intimacy, and who persecuted me so much. He did the same in a concealed way, after having promised me he would not do it. But he

died soon after. I saw him gradually fall off from the grace of God by this infidelity.

There was a Nun in a monastery I often went to, who was entered into a state of purification, which every one in the house looked on as distraction; and therefore they locked her up, which had like to have destroyed her. All that went to see her called it phrenzy or melancholy. I knew her to be devout. I demanded to see her. As soon as I approached, I felt an impression of her state, being that of purification. I desired of the Superior, that she should not be locked up, nor people admitted to see her, but that she would confide her to my care; that I hoped things would change. I discovered that her greatest pain was at being counted a fool. I advised her to bear the state of foolishness, as Jesus Christ had been willing to bear it before Herod. This sacrifice gave her a calmness at once. But as God was willing to purify her soul, he detached her from all those things, to which she had had before the greatest attachment. At last, after she had patiently undergone her sufferings, her Superior wrote to me "that I was in the right, and that she was now come out of that state of dejection, in greater purity than ever."

The winter before I left home was one of the longest and hardest that had been for several years, viz. that of 1680. It was followed with extreme scarcity, which proved to me an occasion of exercising charity. My mother-in-law joined me heartily herein, and appeared to me so much changed, that I could not but be both surprised and overjoyed at it. We distributed at the house ninety-six dozen of loaves every week, but the private charities to the diffident poor were

much greater. I kept poor boys and girls employed at work; and God gave such a blessing to my alms, that I did not find that my family lost any thing by it. Before the death of my husband, my mother-in-law told him, that I should ruin him with my charities, though he himself was so charitable, that in a very dear year, while he was young, he distributed a considerable sum; but now she repeated this to him so often, that he commanded me to set down in writing all the money I laid out, both what I gave for the expence of the house, and for all that I caused to be bought; that from thence he might judge of what I gave to the poor. This new obligation, which I was brought under, appeared to me so much the harder, as for above eleven years that we had been married I had never before had the like required of me. What troubled me most was the fear of having nothing to give to such as wanted. However I submitted to it, yet without retrenching any part of my charities. I did not set down any of my alms, and yet my account of expences was found to answer exactly. I was surprised at it, and esteemed it one of the wonders of providence. This made me more liberal of what I thought was the Lord's and not mine. How much is there in the world of useless dissipation of what would be proper for the subsistance of the poor; for which, if they so applied it, God would reward their very families!

In the time of my greatest pains, some years after my husband's death (for they began three years before my widowhood, and lasted four years after) my footman came to tell me, for I was then in the country, that there was in the road a poor soldier dying. I made him be brought in, and having ordered a sepa-

rate place to be made ready for him, I kept him above a fortnight. His malady was a flux, which he had taken in the army I performed for him with my own hands the most humble offices. I never did any thing of the kind which was so hard to me. The poor man, after I had made him receive his sacrament, fell a victim to the disorder.

What gave me now no small concern was the tenderness I had for my children, especially my younger son, whom I had strong reasons for loving. I saw him inclined to good; and every thing seemed to favour the hopes I had conceived of him. I thought it running a great risque to leave him to another's education. My daughter I designed taking with me, though she was at this time ill in a fever. Providence was pleased so to order it that she timely recovered. The ties, with which God held me closely united to himself, were infinitely stronger than those of flesh and blood. The laws of my sacred marriage obliged we to give up all, to follow my spouse whithersoever it was his pleasure to call me after him. Though I often hesitated, and doubted much before I went, I never doubted, after my going off, of its being his will; and though men, who judge of things only according to the success they seem to have, have taken occasion from my disgraces and sufferings, to judge of my calling; and to run it down as error, illusion and imagination; it is that very persecution, and the multitude of strange crosses it has drawn upon me, of which this imprisonment I now suffer is one, which have confirmed me in the certainty of its truth and validity; nay I am more than ever convinced that the resignation which I have made of every thing is in pure obedience to the divine will. The

gospel effectually in this point shews itself to be true, which has promised to those that shall leave all for the love of God, an hundred fold in this life, and persecutions also. And have not I infinitely more than an hundred fold, in so entire a possession as thou, my God, hast taken of me; in that unshaken firmness which thou givest me in my sufferings, in a perfect tranquility in the midst of a furious tempest, which assaults me on every side; in an unspeakable joy, enlargedness and liberty which I enjoy in a most strait and rigorous captivity. I have no desire that my imprisonment should end before the right time. I love my chains. Every thing is equal to me, as I have no will of my own, but purely the love and will of him who possesses me. My senses indeed have not any relish for such things, but my heart is separated from them, and borne over them: and my perseverance is not of myself, but of him who is my life; so that I can say with the Apostle, "It is no more I that live, but Jesus Christ that liveth in me. It is he in whom I live, move, and have my being."

To return to the subject, from which I often wander without thinking of it. I say then that I was not so uneasy to go with the new catholicks, as to engage with them, not finding a sufficient draught to the latter. I sought for it, but did not find it, though I longed to contribute to the conversion of wandering souls, and God made use of me to convert several families before my departure, one of which was composed of eleven or twelve persons. Besides, Father la Combe had written to me, to make use of this opportunity for setting off, but did not tell me whether I ought to engage with them or not. Thus it was the providence of my God alone, which order-

ed every thing, to which I was resigned without any reserve: and that hindered me from engaging with them.

One day reflecting on this undertaking of mine, I found my faith staggering, weakened with a fear lest I were under a mistake, which slavish fear was increased by an ecclesiastic at our house, who told me it was a rash and ill advised design. Being a little discouraged, I opened the Bible, and at first met with this passage in Isaiah, "Fear not thou worm Jacob, and ye men of Israel. I will help thee saith the Lord, and thy Redeemer the holy one of Israel." Chap. lxi. 14. and near it, "Fear not; for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine: When thou passest through the waters I will be with thee, &c."

I had a very great courage given me for going, but could not persuade myself that it would be to settle with the new catholicks. It was however necessary to see Sister Garnier, their Superior at Paris, in order to take our measures together: but I could not go to Paris, because that journey would have hindered me from taking another at the time when I should have been obliged to go off. She then, though much indisposed, resolved to come and see me. In what a wonderful manner, oh my God, didst thou conduct things by thy providence, to make every thing come to the point of thy will! Every day I saw new miracles, which both amazed and still more confirmed me; for with a paternal goodness thou took care of even the smallest things. As she intended setting off, she fell sick: and thou permitted it to fall out so, to give room thereby for a person, who would have discovered every thing, in the mean time

to take a journey. As she had given me notice of the day she intended to set off, seeing that day was excessively hot, and so sultry that I imagined, that, being taken so much tender care of as she was at home, they would not let her begin her journey then, (which proved to be the case, as she herself told me after) I prayed to the Lord to be pleased to grant a wind to rise, to moderate the violent heat. Scarce had I prayed but there arose suddenly so refreshing a wind, that I was surprised at it: and that wind did not cease, during her whole journey, till after her return.

I went to meet her, and brought her to my country-house, in such sort that she was not seen or known of any body. What embarrassed me a little was, that I had two of my domesticks who knew her: but as I had been labouring for the conversion of a lady, I managed my conversations with her in such a manner, as easily to make them believe that it was on that account I had sent for her, and that it was necessary to keep it secret, that that lady might not be discouraged from coming. Though I knew nothing of controversial points, yet God so furnished me that I did not fail to answer all her objections, and resolve all her doubts (to such a degree) that she could not but give herself up to God entirely. Though sister Garnier had a good share both of grace and natural understanding, yet her words had not such an effect on this soul as those with which God supplied me, as she assured me herself. She even could not forbear speaking of it. I felt a movement to beg her of God, as a testimony of his holy will concerning me; and he was pleased to grant it, (though she did not make her abjuration till after my departure) willing

that I should go off without any other assurance, except that his divine Providence was conducting all things. The sister did not declare her thoughts to me for four days. Then she told me she would not go with me. At this I was the more surprised, as I had persuaded myself that God would grant to her virtue what he would refuse to my demerits. Beside, the reasons she gave appeared to me to be merely human, and void of supernatural grace. That made me hesitate a little: then, taking new courage, through the resignation of my whole self, I said, "I go not thither for your sake: I will not fail to go thither, though without you." This surprised her, as she owned to me; for she thought that, on her refusal, I would decline my purpose of going.

I regulated every thing, and on a paper wrote, as I thought proper, the contract of association with them. No sooner had I done it, but after the communion I felt great trouble of mind for it. I told her my pain, and that I had no doubt but God demanded me at Geneva, yet did not let me see that he would have me to be of their congregation. She desired to have some time till after the mass and communion, and then she would tell me what she thought God required of me. Herein he directed her contrary to both her interests and inclination. She then told me that, "I ought not to connect myself with her, that it was not God's design; that I only ought to go with her sisters, and that when I should be there, Father la Combe, *(whose letter she had seen)* would signify to me the divine will." At once I entered into these sentiments, and my soul then regained the sweets of inward peace.

My first thought had been (before I knew of the new

catholicks going to Gex) to go directly to Geneva, as at that time there were catholicks there in service, and otherwise; and to take some little room without any noise, and without declaring myself at first: and as I knew how to make up all sorts of ointments, to heal wounds, &c. I hoped easily to insinuate myself by this way; and with the charities which I should have done to have won over many of the people. I have no doubt but, if I had followed this draught, things would have succeeded better: but I thought I ought rather to follow the sentiment of the bishop than my own views. What am I saying? Has not thy eternal word, oh my God, had its effect and accomplishment in me? Man speaks as man: but when we behold things in God, we see them in far other lights. Yes, my Lord, thy design was to give Geneva not to my cares, words or works, but to my sufferings: for the more I see things hopeless, the more do I hope for the conversion of that city by a way known to thee only: yes, Geneva, thou shalt see the truth flourish again within thy walls, which error has banished from them: and very happily shall those words be verified in thy favour, which are inscribed on thy town-house: *after darkness light*; though now thy sons take them in a quite contrary sense. One day shalt thou be illuminated with the light of truth, and that beautiful temple of St. Peter shall again have the advantage of containing within its bosom our sacred and important mysteries. How true is it in one sense, oh my Lord, that thou hast made me the daughter of the cross of Geneva, and how heartily would I give my blood to see thy cross sprout up there! Father la Combe has told me since, that he had had a strong impulse to write to me, not to engage with the new

catholicks; that he believed it not to be the will of God concerning me; but he omitted doing it. As to my director, M. Bertot, he died four months before my departure. I had some sign of his death: I was the only person to whom he addressed himself. It seemed that he gave me a portion of his spirit to help his children.

I was seized with a fear that the check I had felt, at stripping myself (in favour of the new catholicks, of what I had designed for Geneva) was a stratagem of nature, which does not love to be stripped. I wrote to sister Garnier to get a contract drawn up according to my first memorial. God permitted me to commit this fault, to make me the more sensible of his protection over me.

END OF PART FIRST.

THE

LIFE OF LADY GUION.

PART SECOND.

FROM HER LEAVING FRANCE 'TILL HER RETURN TO IT, BEING ABOUT FIVE YEARS.

CONTENTS OF PART SECOND.

CHAPTER I. HER departure from her own house, then from Paris. Her interview at Corbeil with the first Instrument of her conversion. She joins the Flying-Coach at Melun; goes by the cities of Lyons, Chamberry, Annecy and Geneva, to Gex.

II. She resides with the new Catholicks at Gex, where her little daughter is reduced to extremity. Father La Combe, coming to her, advises her to remove the child to Tonon, where she meets with a famous Hermit. Her child fares hardly at first, but soon recovers.

III. Outcry in France against M. Guion, changed into applauses. A visit from the bishop of Geneva. Wonderful assistance and benefit received through F. la Combe, now her director.

IV. The excellence and purity of the state into which Christ had brought her. Her return through Geneva, and her dangerous fall from a horse. Money sent to her out of France for the community she was in.

V. She voluntarily resigns her estate to her relations, in favour of her children. Her persecutions by an Ecclesiastic, who prejudices the Bishop of Geneva against her. Her conduct and manner of life at Gex.

VI. She retires to the Ursulines at Tonon, whither persecutions follow her. A remarkable discourse between the bishop of Geneva and F. la Combe.

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VIII. The tranquility of her mind in the midst of probations. Her remarks thereupon, and on the apostolic life.

IX. She writes some letters to the Bishop of Geneva, and to F. la Mothe, but in vain. More oppositions from that vile Ecclesiastic. She is visited and succoured by a sister of hers, but exercised by a Nun, who vainly fancies herself to be highly advanced in piety. F. La Combe, newly returned from Rome, comes to see her. She receives an invitation from the Archbishop of Sens.

X. Her daughter, seized with the Small-pox and Purples, soon re-

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XI. Divers remarkable instances of the care of Providence commemorated. Duplicity of the bishop of Geneva. Her own exemptions from all troubles of mind. She writes her Treatise of Torrents, which has been twice printed in Holland.

XII. Her entrance into the state of Christ's childhood and obedience. She learns to command and obey by the word. The haughty Nun brought down. How she felt for F. la Combe, whether present or absent.

XIII. In her sickness she is favoured with profound views of the future; and with a spiritual communication in heavenly silence.

XIV. Her state represented to her under the figure of the Woman in the Revelations. An hospital established by her and F. la Combe at Gex for poor people who were sick. Her journey to Lausanne.

XV. Her departure from the Ursulines at Tonon. She lives next in a wretched poor place, where she is grievously persecuted. The Marchioness of Prunai invites her to Turin, whither she goes attended by F. la Combe. She receives invitations from the bishops of Aouste and Verceil.

XVI. She is endued with the gift of discerning of spirits, clear of any outward information. The deceit of the bishop of Geneva laid open. A remarkable dream of M. Guion. The excellence and purity of the state, into which the Lord had brought her soul, reviewed and recited.

XVII. She converts a Religious or Friar; then foretels his infidelity. Singular conversion of another. Her departure from Turin for Paris by Grenoble, where she is visited by many, all whose inward states she discerns. The apostolic state described; its nature and effects,

XVIII. Of a set of Friars that violently persecuted those who led a spiritual life, through the exercise of prayer, of which kind we here meet with bright examples; and how some of the very same order of friars became zealous to promote and encourage the spirit of prayer. How M. Guion was made the mother of many children in Christ.

XIX. Of a young woman brought out of a state of unbelief and error, becoming sensibly convinced that M. Guion was actuated in her labours by the divine Spirit.

XX. Her exceeding great services, and favours of God conferred on her, in the conversion of souls.

XXI. Her inspiration, and diligence in writing passages of Scripture and their explications. *A short and easy Method of Prayer*, written by her, printed by a Counsellor of the Parliament. It soon passed

through five or six editions, and was afterwards made the pretext for her imprisonment.

XXII. A violent tempest of rage and envy breaking out against her. Of her spiritual communications and intelligences.

XXIII. She goes with the bishop of Grenoble's Almoner, to pass some time at Marseilles. She is in danger of being drowned in the river Rhone in her way to Valence. She has great respect paid her by the bishops of Marseilles and Grenoble. She embarks on the sea for Genoa, where, after a stormy passage, she arrives. Her treatment there. From thence she passes through a wood infested with robbers, who used to murder those whom they robbed. Four men armed come up and stop her litter. They saluted her and retired: with sundry other occurrences.

XXIV. Her arrival at Verceil, where she is kindly and affectionately treated: and especially by the bishop, who was so much edified with her conversation, that he made it his study how to detain her there.

XXV. F. la Combe ordered to return to Paris, and to conduct M. Guion thither. Sorrowful parting of the Bishop of Verceil with them. They go to see the Marchioness of Prunai, who, by their encouragement, establishes an hospital, as M. Guion had done at Grenoble. At Chamberry they meet with F. la Mothe, their bitter persecutor, though here he puts on a smooth and deceitful countenance. All along the road they had a sense of the persecution awaiting them at Paris. Some wanted to persuade them to stop, and not return thither, but they thought it their duty to go, to suffer whatever might be allotted them.

THE

LIFE OF LADY GUION.

PART SECOND.

CHAPTER I.

I WENT off, in a strange renunciation, and in great simplicity, scarce able to render the reason of what made me, in such a manner quit my family, which I most tenderly loved, being without any positive assurance, *yet hoping, even against hope itself.* I went to the new Catholicks at Paris, where Providence wrought wonders to conceal me. They sent for the Notary, who had drawn up the contract of engagement. When he read it to me, I felt such a repugnance to it, that I could not with patience hear it to the end, much less sign it. The Notary wondered at it; and much more so, when sister Garnier came in, and told him herself, *that there needed no contract of engagement.* I was enabled, through divine assistance, to put my affairs in very great order, and to write sundry letters by the inspiration of the spirit of God, and not my own spirit. This was what I never experienced before. But what was given me at that time only as a beginning, has since been given me with much more force and perfection, as I shall relate in the sequel.

I had two domesticks whom it was very difficult for me to discharge, as I did not think to take them with me. If I had left them, they would have told of my departure; and I should have been sent after; as I was, when it was known. But God so ordered it that they were willing to follow me: they were of no use to me, and soon after returned into France. I took with me also my little daughter, and two maids to serve us both. We set off in a boat on the river, though I had taken places in the stage-coach, in order that if they searched for me in it, they might not find me. I went to Melun,* to wait for it there.

It was surprising, that in this boat the child without knowing what she did, could not forbear making crosses, employing a person to cut her bulrushes for that purpose. She then put round me, all over, more than three hundred of them. I let her do it, and inwardly apprehended that it was not without a mystery that she did it. With it was given an interior certainty that I was going to meet with crosses in abundance; and that this child was *sowing* the cross, for me to *reap* it. Sister Garnier who saw, that, whatever efforts they made for it, they could not hinder her from covering me with crosses, said to me. "What that child does appears to be mysterious;" then she said to her, "My pretty little maid, put some crosses on me too." She replied, "No; they are for my dear mother." She gave her one to stop her importunity, then continued putting more on me: after which she desired some river flowers, which were on the water,

* Melun is a town on the river Seine, 25 miles south-east from Paris, which city also stands on the same river.

to be given her; and making a bonnet of them, she put it on my head, and said to me, "After the cross you will be crowned." I admired all this in silence, and offered myself up to the pure love of God as a victim, free and willing to be sacrificed to him."*

Some time before my departure, a religious woman, who is a true saint, and a particular friend of mine, related to me a vision she had respecting me. She said, "She saw my heart surrounded with thorns; that our Lord appeared in it well pleased; that, though the thorns seemed likely to tear it, yet, instead of doing that, they only rendered it fairer, and our Lord's approbation the stronger."

In my way at Corbeil,† I met with the priest whom God had first made use of, so powerfully to draw me to his love. He approved of my design to leave all for the Lord; but he thought I should not be well suited with the new Catholicks. He told me some particular things of them to shew that our views were incompatible. He gave me a caution not to let them know I walked in the inward path; that, if I did, I must expect nothing but persecutions from them. But it is in vain to contrive to hide, when God sees it best for us to suffer, and when our wills are utterly resigned to him, and totally passed into his will. Oh King of divine lovers! thou struck on thyself, in all the justice of God: and this soul devoted to imitate, and to be conformable to thee, being clothed with thy righteous indignation against its own transgressions, strikes on itself in thy justice. Oh admirable thing only known by experience!

* This little daughter lived to be married to the Count de Vaux, as we shall see in the IIId part, chap. xi.

† Corbeil a little town on the river Seine, 26 miles south of Paris.

At Paris I gave the new Catholicks all the money I had. I reserved not to myself a single penny, rejoicing to be poor after the example of Jesus Christ. I brought from home nine thousand livres: as by my donation I had not reserved it to myself, it has returned to my children, but none of it to me, which gives me no trouble; for poverty, thus procured, makes my riches. The rest I gave entirely to the sisters who were with us, as well to supply their travelling expences, as for their beginning to buy furniture. I did not reserve so much as my linen for my own use, putting it into the common repository. I had neither a locked coffer, nor purse. I had brought but little linen for fear of mistrust; and lest, in wanting to carry off clothes, I should have been discovered. My persecutors have not failed to report that I had brought great sums from home, which I had imprudently expended, and given to the relations of father la Combe, which is as false, as it is true that I had not a penny; and that, on my arrival at Annecy, a poor man asking alms, I, having nothing else, gave him the buttons from my sleeves. At another time I gave a poor man a little ring, quite plain, in the name of Jesus Christ, which I had worn as a token of my marriage with him.

We joined the flying coach at Melun, where I left sister Garnier, and went on with the other sisters, with whom I had no acquaintance. Though the carriages were very fatiguing, though I got no sleep through so long a journey, and was so tender that want of sleep used to give me a fit of sickness; and though my daughter, a very tender child, only five years of age, got scarce any sleep, yet we bore so great a fatigue without falling sick by the way; and this child

had not an hour's uneasiness, though she was only three hours in bed every night. God only knows both the sacrifices which he induced me to make, and the joy of my heart in sacrificing every thing to him. Had I kingdoms and empires, methinks I should offer them up with still more joy, to give him the higher marks of my love. But is it quitting any thing to quit it for him ?

As soon as we arrived at the inn, I went to church to pay due honour to my Saviour, and stayed there till dinner time. In the coach my Divine Love had carried on with me, and in me a conversation which the others were not capable of; and the cheerfulness I shewed, even in tht midst of the greatest dangers, encouraged them. I even sang songs of joy at seeing myself disengaged from the riches, honours and entanglements of the world. God in such a manner protected us, that he seemed to be to us *a pillar of fire by night, and a pillar of cloud by day.* We passed over a very dangerous spot between Lyons* and Chambery. Our carriage broke at coming out of it. Had it happened a little sooner we must have perished.

We arrived at Annecy on Magdalen's eve 1681 : and on Magdalen's day the bishop of Geneva said mass for us, at the tomb of St. Francis de Sales. There I renewed my spiritual marriage with my Redeemer; as I did every year on this day. There also I honoured the remains of that saint, with whom our Lord gives me a singular union. I say union : for it appears to me that the soul in God is united with the saints, and the more so as they are more conformable

* Lyons, capital of Lyonois, at the confluence of the rivers Rhone and Saone, a city of very great trade, containing 11 parishes, and about 90,000 inhabitants, 225 miles S. E. from Paris, and 45 miles W. from Chambery, the capital city of Savoy, which last is 45 miles S. from Geneva.

to him: and it is an union of unity which it pleases God sometimes to revive, and awaken in the soul for his own glory; at such times those saints are rendered more intimately present to that soul in God himself: and this revival is as it were an intercourse of friend with friend in him who unites them all with one immortal tie. Generally all continues hid with Jesus Christ in God.

That day we left Annecy; and on the next went to hear mass at Geneva, at the house of the French resident. I had much joy at being at the communion; and it seemed to me as if there God more powerfully united me to himself. And there I prayed to him for the conversion of that great people. That evening we arrived late at Gex, where we found only four walls; though the Bishop of Geneva had assured us that the house was furnished, as undoubtedly he believed it to be. We lodged at the house of the sisters of the charity, who were so kind as to give us their beds.

I was in great pain of mind for my daughter, who visibly fell away. I had a strong desire to place her with the Ursulines at Tonon. My heart was so affected on her behalf, that I could not forbear weeping in secret for her. Next day I said, "I would take my daughter to Tonon, and leave her there, till I should see how we might be accommodated here." They opposed it strongly, after a manner which seemed very hard-hearted, as well as ungrateful, seeing she was just worn away to a skeleton. I looked upon the poor child as a victim, whom I had imprudently sacrificed. I wrote to Father la Combe, intreating him to come to see me, to consult together thereupon; thinking I could not in conscience keep her in this place any longer. Several days passed

without my having any answer. In the mean time I became resigned to the will of God, whether to have succour or not.

CHAPTER II.

Our Lord who took pity on the lamentable condition of my daughter, so ordered it, that the Bishop of Geneva wrote to Father la Combe, to come as speedily as possible to see us, and to console us. As soon as I saw that father, I was surprised to feel an interior grace, which I may call Communication; and such as I had never had before with any person. It seemed to me that an influence of Grace came from him to me, through the innermost of the soul; and returned from me to him, in such sort that he felt the same effect. Like a tide of grace it caused a flux and reflux, flowing on into the divine and invisible ocean. This is a pure and holy union which God alone operates, and which has still subsisted, and even increased betwixt us. It is an union exempted from all weakness, and from all self-interest, which causes those who are blessed with it, to rejoice in the willing and patient sufferings for Christ, both of themselves and of their near and dear friends; an union which has no need of the presence of the body; which at certain times absence makes not more absent; nor presence more present; an union unknown to all men but such as are come to experience it: nor can it ever be experienced but betwixt such souls as are united to God. As I had never before felt an union of this sort with any one, it appeaaed to me then quite new, having never heard tell of

the like. It never gave me any doubt of its being from God; for, far from turning away the mind from him, it tended to draw it more deeply into him. It dissipated all my pains; and fixed my whole soul in the most profound tranquility.

God gave him at first much openness toward me. He related to me the mercies God had shewed him, and several extraordinary things, which gave me at first some fear. I suspected some illusion, especially in such things as flatter, in regard to the future; little apprehending then, that God would make use of me to draw him from this state, and bring him into that of *naked faith*. But the grace, which flowed from him into my soul, recovered me from that fear, as I saw it joined with extraordinary humility; and that, far from being elevated with the gifts which God had liberally conferred on him, or with his own profound learning, no person could have a lower opinion of himself than he had. He told me, "As to my daughter, it would be best for me to take her to Tonon, where he thought she would be very well placed." And as to myself, after I had mentioned to him my dislike to the manner of life of the new Catholicks, he told me, "that he did not think that it would be my proper place to be long with them; but that it would be best for me to stay there, free from all engagements, till God, by the conduct of his providence, should make known to me how he would dispose of me, and draw my mind to the place whither he would have me to remove." I had already begun to wake regularly *at midnight*, in order to pray. At this time I awaked with these words suddenly put into my mind, "It is written of me, I will do thy will, oh God." This was accompanied with

such a flow of grace, so pure and penetrating, that I never had any more sweet and powerful. And here I may remark, that the state of my soul was already permanent in newness of life; but this new life was not yet in that immutability which it has since been in. To speak properly, it was a beginning life and a rising day, which goes on ever increasing till the meridian of glory; a day which has no more night; a life which fears no more death, not even in death itself; because he who has suffered the first death, shall no more be hurt of the second. From midnight I continued on my knees till four o'clock in the morning, in prayer, in a sweet intercourse with God, and did the same also the night following.

Next day after mass, Father la Combe told me, that he had a very great certainty, that I was a stone which God designed for the foundation of a great building. But what that building was, he knew no more than I. After whatever manner then it is to be, whether his divine Majesty will make use of me in this life, for some design known to himself only, or will make me one of the stones of the new and heavenly JERUSALEM, it seems to me that such stone cannot be polished, but by the strokes of the hammer; and that our Lord has given to this soul of mine the qualities of the stone, viz. firmness, a resignation, like insensibility, to endure hardness and the operations of his hand.

I then carried my little daughter to the Ursulines at Tonon. That poor child took a vast fondness for Father la Combe, saying, "He is a good father, one from God." Here I found a hermit, whom they called Brother Anselm. He was one of the greatest sanctity of any that has been seen of a long time.

He was from Geneva; and God had drawn him from thence after a very miraculous manner, at twelve years of age. He had (with the permission of the Cardinal, at that time Archbishop of Aix in Provence) at nineteen years of age taken the habit of hermit of St. Augustine. He lived all alone (except one other hermit living with him) in a little hermitage, where they saw nobody but such as came to visit their chapel. He had lived twelve years in this hermitage, never eating any thing but pulse with salt, and sometimes oil. Three times a week he lived only on bread and water. He never drank wine, and generally made but one meal in twenty-four hours. He wore for a shirt a coarse hair cloth, and lodged on the bare ground. He lived in a continual state of prayer, and in the greatest humility. God had done by him many signal miracles.

This good hermit had a great sense of the designs of God on Father la Combe and me. But God shewed him at the same time that strange crosses were preparing for us both, and that we were both destined for the aid of souls. I did not find, as I expected, any fit place for my daughter at Tonon. In regard to her, I thought myself like Abraham when going to sacrifice his son. Father la Combe, accosting me here, said, "Welcome, daughter of Abraham!" I found little encouragement to leave her there, and could still worse keep her with myself, because we had no room; and the little girls, whom they took to make catholicks, were all mixed with us, and had contracted such habits as were pernicious. To leave her there I thought not right. The language of the country, where scarce any one understood French, and the food, which she could not take, being so far dif-

ferent from ours, were great hardships. All my tenderness for her was awakened, and I looked on myself as her destroyer. I experienced what Hagar suffered, when she put away her son Ishmael in the desert, that she might not be forced to see him perish. I thought, if I had ventured to expose myself, I ought at least to have spared my daughter; as the loss of her education, and even of her life, appeared to me inevitable. Every thing looked dark in regard to her.

I thought that, with her natural disposition and fine qualities, she would have shined and attracted admiration, if educated in France, and been likely to have had such offers for marriage as she could never hope to meet with in this poor country; in which, if she should recover, she would never be likely to be fit for any thing. Here she could eat nothing of what was got for her. All her subsistence was only some spoonfuls of unpleasant and disagreeable broth, which I forced her to take against her will. I seemed like a second Abraham, holding the knife over her to destroy her. Our Lord would have me make a sacrifice to him, without any consolation, plunged in sorrow; and night was the time which gave vent to it. He made me see, on one side, the grief of her grand-mother, if she should hear of her death, which she would impute to my taking the child away from her; and the great reproach it would be accounted among all the family. The gifts of nature she was endowed with were now like pointed darts which pierced me. I believe that God so ordered it, to purify me from a too human attachment, which was still so ready to adhere to me. For after I returned from the Ursulines at Tonon, they changed her manner of diet, and gave her what was suitable

to her delicacy; whereby, in a short time, she finely recovered.

CHAPTER III.

As soon as it was known in France, that I was gone off out of it, there was a general outcry. Those who attacked me, with the most violence upon it, were the human spiritualists; Father de la Mothe wrote to me, that all persons of learning and piety, of the gown and of the sword, united in censuring me for it. To alarm me still more, he informed me that my mother-in-law with whom I had trusted my younger son and my children's substance, was fallen into a state of childhood. This however was very false.

I answered all these thundering letters as the spirit dictated. My answers were thought very just, and were well relished, whereby those violent exclamations were soon changed into applauses. Father la Mothe appeared to change his censures of me for esteem: yet it did not hold long. Self-interest threw him back again; being disappointed in his hopes of a pension, which he expected I would have settled on him. Also Sister Garnier, whatever was her reason, changed and declared against me.

Here I both eat and slept little. The food which was given us had become spoilt, by reason of the great heat of the weather, and being kept too long; insomuch that what I should have formerly beheld with abhorrence now became my only nourishment; and yet every thing was rendered easy to me. In God I found, with increase, every thing

which I had lost for him. That spirit, which once I thought I had lost in a strange stupidity, was restored to me with inconceivable advantages. I was astonished at it myself. I found there was nothing for which it was not proper, or in which it did not succeed. Those who observed it said, "I had a prodigious capacity." I well knew that I had but a poor one; but that in God my spirit had received a quality which it had never had before. I thought I experienced something of the state which the Apostles were in, after they had received the Holy Ghost. I knew, I comprehended, I understood, I was enabled to do every thing requisite. I had every sort of good thing, and no want of any thing. I remembered that fine passage of wisdom, *All good things came to me with her.* Wisdom of Sol. vii. 2. When Jesus Christ the eternal wisdom is formed in the soul, after the death of the first Adam, it finds in him all good things communicated to it.

Some time after my arrival at Gex, the Bishop of Geneva came to see us. I spoke to him with great openness, and with the fervency of the spirit which conducted me. He was so clearly convinced, and so much affected, that he could not forbear to express it. He opened his heart to me on what God had required from him. He confessed to me his own deviation and infidelity. Every time, when I spoke to him, he entered into what I said, and acknowledged it to be the truth; as indeed it was the spirit of truth which inspired me to speak to him, without which I should be only a mere simpleton. And yet as soon as they, who sought for pre-eminence, and could not suffer any good but what came from themselves *spoke to him*, he was so weak as to let himself

be imposed on with impressions against the truth. This foible, with others, have hindered him from doing all the good, which otherwise he might have done in his diocese.

After I had spoken to him, he said, "he had it in his mind to give me Father la Combe for director; that he was a man illuminated of God, who well understood the inward path, and had a singular gift of pacifying souls." These were his own words. Greatly was I rejoiced when the bishop gave me him, seeing thereby his authority united with the grace which already seemed to have given him to me, by an union and effusion of supernatural light and love. The fatigues I had, and watchings with my daughter, threw me into a violent malady, attended with exquisite pains. The physicians judged me in danger, and yet the Sisters of the house quite neglected me: especially she who had the care of the economy of it was so penurious, that she did not give me what was necessary to sustain life. I had not a penny to help myself with, as I had reserved nothing to myself. And beside, they at that time received all the money which was remitted to me from France, which was very considerable. Thus I practised poverty, and was in necessity with those to whom I had given all. They wrote to Father la Combe, desiring him to come to me, to receive my confession. He, on hearing of my condition, was so moved with charity, as to walk on foot all night, it being eight great leagues. No otherwise did he travel; in that as in every thing beside, imitating our Lord Jesus Christ.*

* Singly devoted to serve God, and faithful to the sight of duty which, in the land of darkness, was given him, Father la Combe ap-

As soon as he entered the house, my pains abated: and when he had entered my chamber, and blessed me, laying his hands on my head, I was perfectly cured, to the great astonishment of my physicians; who being of a different religion, were not willing to acknowledge the miracle; being not well pleased when they knew that we were come to draw back from error such as should be disposed or prevailed on, to return from it. These sisters themselves advised me to go to my daughter, to take milk for a fortnight. Father la Combe returned with me in the same boat. A violent storm arose on the lake, which made me very sick, and seemed likely to overset the boat. But the hand of providence remarkably appeared in our favour; for though the waves grew more boisterous, yet they no more touched the boat, but broke at above a foot distance from it, which was taken notice of by the mariners and passengers, who looked upon Father la Combe as a saint. Thus we arrived at Tonon, where I found myself so perfectly recovered, that, instead of making and using the remedies I had proposed, I went into a retreat, and stayed there twelve days. In this retreat I made vows of perpetual *chastity*, *poverty* and *obedience*, to wit, readily to obey whatever I should believe to be the will of God, also to obey the church, and to honour Jesus Christ in such a manner as he pleased.

At this time I found that I had the *perfect chastity* of love to God, mine being without any reserve, di-

X

pears to have been a laborious good man in his station, not shunning the cross, or shrinking from persecutions; and was at last for his fidelity thrown into prison, where, so far as appears, he ended his days. I regret we have no other than that Popish name left whereby to speak of him. What is the design of proper names being given, if *custom* or *fashion* is thus allowed to obliterate, and render them entirely useless

vision, or view of interest; *perfect poverty*, by the total privation of every thing that was mine, both inwardly and outwardly; *perfect obedience to the will of God, submission to the church, and honour to Jesus Christ* in loving himself only; the effect of which soon appeared. When by the loss of *ourselves* we are passed into God, and returned into our origin, our will is made one and the same with that of God, according to the prayer of Christ, "As thou Father art in me, and I in thee, grant that they also may be in us." John xvii. 21. Oh it is then that the will is rendered marvellous, both because it is made the will of God, which is the greatest of miracles and their end; and because it works wonders in him: for as it is God who wills in this soul, that will has its effect. Scarce has it willed but the thing is done.

Why then, *may some say*, so many oppressions endured? Why do not these souls, if they have such a power set themselves free from them? If they had any will to do any thing of that sort, and it were not granted; that would be the *will of the flesh*, or the *will of man*, and *not the will of God*. John i. 13.

I rose constantly at midnight, ever waking timely enough to do it. If I wound up my alarm-watch, then I used not to wake in time. I saw that God had over me the care of a father and a spouse. When I had any indisposition and my body wanted rest, he did not awake me; but at such times I felt even in my sleep a singular possession of him. Some years have passed wherein I have had only a kind of half sleep: but my soul waked the more for God, as sleep seemed to steal from it every other attention. The Lord made it known also to many persons, that he designed me for a mother of great people, but a

people simple and childlike. They took these intelligences in a literal sense, and thought it related to some institution or congregation: but to me it appeared nothing else, than the persons whom it pleased God that I should afterwards win over to him; to whom I should serve as a mother, through his goodness; giving them the same union of affection for me as that of children for a parent, but an union much deeper and stronger; and giving me all that was necessary for them, to bring them to walk in the way by which he would lead them, as I shall shew in the sequel, when I shall speak of that state of maternity or motherhood.

CHAPTER IV.

BEFORE I proceed farther in what I have to write, which I would willingly suppress, if any thing of it were my own, as well on account of the difficulty of expressing myself thereupon, as because few souls are capable of a conduct so little known, and so little comprehended, that I have never read of any thing like it, I shall say something of the interior dispositions I was then in. If it serves you, who are willing to be of the number of my children, and if it serves such as are already my children, to induce them to let God glorify himself in them after this manner, and not after theirs, I shall think my pains well employed. If there be any thing which they do not comprehend, let them die to themselves, and they will gain a stronger experience than from any thing I could say: for *expression* never equals experience.

After I had come out of the trying condition I have

spoken of, I found it had purified my soul. I possessed God after a manner so pure, and so immense, as nothing else could equal. In regard to thoughts or desires, all was so clean, so naked, so lost in the divinity, that the soul had no selfish movement, however plausible or delicate; both the powers of the mind, and the very senses being wonderfully purified. Sometimes I was surprised to find that there appeared not one thought. The imagination, formerly so troublesome, now no more any way troubled me: I had no more perplexity or uneasy reflections. The will, being perfectly dead to all its own appetites, was become void of every human inclination both natural and spiritual, and only inclined of God to whatever he pleased, and in whatever manner he pleased. This vastitude, or enlargedness, which is not bounded by any thing, however plain or simple it may be, increases every day; so that my soul, in partaking of the qualities of her spouse, seems also to partake of his immensity. My prayer was in an openness and singleness inconceivable, and at the same time of a depth inexplicable. I was as it were borne up on high, out of myself. I believe God was pleased to bless me with this experience, at the beginning of the new life, to make me comprehend, in favour of other souls, this passage of the soul into God.

When I went to confess, I felt such an immersion of the soul into him, that I could scarcely speak. This ascension of the spirit, wherein God draws the soul so powerfully not into its own inmost recess, but into himself, is not operated till after the *mystic death*, wherein the soul actually comes out of itself to pass into its divine object. I call it *death*, that is to say, a passage from one thing to another: and it is

truly a happy *passover* for the soul, and its *passage* into the promised land. The spirit which is created to be united to its own principle (or origin) has so powerful a tendency to it, (*that is*, to God) that if it were not stopt by a continual miracle, its moving quality would cause the body to be drawn after it whithersoever it would, by reason of its impetuosity and noble descent: but God has given it a terrestrial body to serve for a counterpoise. This spirit, then, created to be united to its origin, without any medium or interstice, feeling itself drawn by its divine object, tends to it with an extreme violence; in such sort that God, suspending for some time the power which the body has to hold back the spirit, it follows with ardency: but when it is not sufficiently purified to pass into God, it gradually returns back to itself; and as the body resumes its own quality, it returns to the earth. The saints who have been the most perfect have advanced to that degree, as to have nothing of all this; and some have lost it towards the end of their lives, becoming single and pure as the others, because they then had in reality and permanence, what they had at first only as transient fruitions, in the time of the prevalence or dominion of the body. It is certain then that the soul by death to itself passes into its divine object: and it is what I then experienced. I found the farther I went, the more my spirit was lost in its Sovereign, who attracted it more and more to himself. And he was pleased at first that I should know this for the sake of others, and not for myself only. Indeed he drew my soul more and more into himself, till it lost itself entirely out of sight, and could perceive itself no more. It seemed at first to pass into him, and afterwards to

be transformed into him. As one sees a river pass into the ocean, lose itself in it, its water for a time distinguished from that of the sea, till it gradually becomes transformed into the same sea, and possesses all its qualities; so was my soul lost in God, who communicated to it his qualities, having drawn it out of all that it had of its own. Its life is an inconceivable innocence, not known or comprehended of those who are still shut up in themselves (or only live to themselves.)

The joy which such a soul possesses in its God is so great, that it experiences the truth of those words of the royal Prophet, "All they who are in thee, oh Lord, are like persons ravished with joy." To such a soul the words of our Lord seem to be addressed, "Your joy no man shall take from you." John xvi. 22. It is as it were plunged in a river of peace. Its prayer is continual. Nothing can hinder it from praying to God, or from loving him. It amply verifies these words in the Canticles, "I sleep but my heart waketh;" for it finds that even sleep itself does not hinder it from praying. Oh unutterable happiness! who could ever have thought that a soul, which seemed to be in the utmost misery, should ever find a happiness equal to this? Oh happy *poverty*, happy *loss*, happy *nothing*, which gives no less than God himself in his own immensity, no more adjusted to the limited manner of the creature, but always drawing it out of that, to plunge it wholly into his own divine Essence.

Then the soul knows that all the states of self-pleasing visions, openings, ecstacies and raptures, are rather obstacles, and that they do not serve this state which is far above them; because the state, which has supports, has pain to lose them; and yet cannot re-

rive at this without such loss. In this are verified the words of an experienced Saint; "When I would, *says he*, possess nothing *through self-love*, every thing was given me without going after it." Oh happy dying of the grain of wheat, which makes it produce a hundred fold! The soul is then so passive, so disposed equally to receive from the hand of God either good or evil, as renders it surprising. It receives both the one and the other without any selfish emotions, letting them flow and be lost as they come. They pass away as if they did not touch us.

After I finished my retreat with the Ursulines at Tonon, I returned through Geneva; and having found no other means of conveyance, the French Resident lent me a horse. As I knew not how to ride on horseback, I made a difficulty of doing it; but as he assured me that it was a very quiet horse, I ventured to mount him. There was a sort of a Smith who, looking at me with a wild haggard look, struck the horse a blow on the back, just as I had got upon him, which made him give a leap. He threw me on the ground with such force that they thought I was killed. I fell on my temple. My cheek bone was broken in two, and two of my teeth driven into my head. I was supported by an invisible hand: and in a little time I mounted as well as I could on another horse, and had a man on my side to keep me up.

My relations left me in peace at Gex, testifying their esteem for me; and as they had heard at Paris of my miraculous cure, it made a great noise there. Many persons in reputation for sanctity then wrote to me. I received letters from Madamoiselle de Lamoignon, and another young lady, who was so moved

with my answer, that she sent me a hundred pistoles for our house, and let me know beside, "that, when we wanted money, I had only to write to her; and that she would send me all I could desire." They talked in Paris of printing an account of the sacrifice I had made, and inserting in it the miracle of my sudden recovery. I do not know what prevented it: but such is the inconstancy of the creature, that this journey, which drew upon me at that time so much applause, has served for a pretext for the strange condemnation which has since been passed upon me.

CHAPTER V.

My near kinsfolks did not signify any eager desire for my return. The first thing they proposed to me a month after my arrival at Gex, was not only to give up my Guardianship*, but to make over all my estate to my children, and to reserve an annuity to myself. This proposition, coming from people who regarded nothing but their own interest, to some might have appeared very unpleasing; but it was in no wise so to me. I had not any friend to advise with. I knew not any one whom I could consult about the manner of executing the thing, as I was quite free and willing to do it. It seemed to me that I had thereby the means of accomplishing my vow, and the extreme desire I had of being conformable to Jesus Christ, poor, naked, and stript of all. I was obliged to send a Letter of Attorney which they had directed to be drawn up. Not perceiving some

* *Gardenoble*, Guardianship of a nobleman's children.

clauses which were inserted in it, I innocently signed it. It expressed that, when my children should die, I should inherit nothing of my own estate, but that it should devolve to my collateral kindred. There were many other things which appeared to be equally to my disadvantage. Though what I had reserved for myself was sufficient to support me in this place; yet it was scarcely enough to do it in some others. I then gave up my estate with more joy, for being thereby conformed to Jesus Christ, than they could have by it who asked it from me. It is what I have never repented of, nor had any uneasiness about. What pleasure to lose all, and to quit every thing for God! The love of poverty, thus contracted, is the kingdom of tranquility.

I forgot to tell, that towards the end of my miserable state of privation, when just ready to enter into newness of life, our Lord illuminated me so clearly to see that the exterior crosses came from him, that I could harbour no resentment against the persons who procured me them. On the contrary, I felt the tenderness of compassion for them, and had more pain for those which I innocently caused them, than for those which they caused me. I saw that these persons feared God too much to do to me what they did, if they had known it. I saw his hand in it, and I felt the pain which they suffered, through the contrariety of their humours. It is hard to conceive the tenderness which God gave me for them, and the desire which I have had, with the utmost sincerity, to procure them every sort of advantage.

[M. Guion here gives a short account of some uncommon appearances and occurrences, which were probably the work of some wicked persons to terrify her.—If this was the case, their efforts proved unavailing; she remained calm and quiet; and was no more troubled in this way.]

One of the sisters whom I had brought, a very beautiful girl, contracted an intimacy with an Ecclesiastic who had authority in this place. At first he inspired her with an aversion for me, being well assured that if she placed confidence in me, I should advise her not to suffer his visits so frequently. She was undertaking a religious retreat. That Ecclesiastic was desirous to induce her to make it, in order to gain her entire confidence which would have served for a cloak to his frequent visits. The Bishop of Geneva had given for director of our house Father la Combe. And as this father was going to cause retreats to be made, I desired her to wait for him. As I began to gain some place in her mind, she submitted thereto, even against her inclination, which was to have made it under this Ecclesiastic. I began to talk to her on the subject of inward prayer, and drew her into the practice of this duty. Our Lord gave such a blessing thereto, that this girl, one of good parts, gave herself to God in good earnest, and with her whole heart: and the retreat completely won her over. She then became more reserved, and on her guard toward this Ecclesiastic, which exceedingly vexed him. It enraged him against both Father la Combe and myself. This proved the source of the persecutions which afterward befell me.

This Ecclesiastic, who confessed in the house, began to talk privately of me with contempt. I knew it and took no notice of it. There came a certain Friar to see him, who mortally hated Father la Combe on account of his regularity. These combined together to force me to quit the house, and to become masters of it themselves. All the means they could devise they studied for that purpose.

My manner of life was such, that in the house I did not meddle in any thing at all, leaving the sisters to dispose of the temporals as they pleased. Soon after my entrance into it I received eighteen hundred livres, which a lady, a friend of mine, lent me to compleat our furniture, which I paid her at my late giving up of my estate. This sum they received as well as what I had before given them. I sometimes spoke a little to those who retired thither to become Catholicks; and our Lord favoured with so much benediction what I said to them, that some, whom they knew not before what to make of, became sensible solid women, and exemplary in piety.

The Bishop of Geneva allowed us to have the holy sacrament in our house. The chapel being not yet secure enough, for three nights I watched the host, lying all alone in the said chapel. I was moved to pray for that unhappy city which was the object of my tenderness, and has proved the subject of all my disgraces.

I saw crosses in abundance likely to fall to my lot. At the same time these words came into my mind, "Who for the joy that was set before him endured *the cross.*" Heb. xii. 2. I prostrated myself for a long time with my face on the ground, earnestly desiring to receive all thy strokes, Oh thou who spared not thine own son! Thou found none but him worthy of thee, and thou still findest in him hearts proper for thee.

A few days after my arrival at Gex, I saw in a sacred and mysterious dream (for as such I very well distinguished it) Father la Combe fastened to a great cross naked, in like manner as they paint our Saviour. I saw round it a frightful crowd which covered me

with confusion, and threw back on me the ignominy of his punishment. He seemed to have more pain than I, and I more reproaches than he. I have since beheld this fully accomplished.

The aforesaid Ecclesiastic won over to his party one of our sisters who was the house-steward, and soon after the prioress. The good inclination which I had did not give strength to my body. I had two maids of my own with me in the house to serve me: but as the community had need of one of them for their cook, and the other to attend the door and other occasions, I gave them up to them, not thinking but they would allow them to serve me sometimes, and do for me what I could not do for myself; for besides this, I let them still receive all my income, they having had already my first half of this year's annuity: and yet they would not allow either of my maid-servants to do any thing for me. By my office of sacristan, I was obliged to sweep the church which was large, and they would not permit any one to help me in it. I have several times fainted away over the broom, and have been forced to rest myself in little corners, quite spent. This obliged me to beg them, that they would suffer it to be sometimes swept by some of the country girls which were there, new catholicks, which at last they had the charity to consent to. What most embarrassed me was, that I had never before washed, and was now obliged to wash all the vestry linen. I took one of my maids to do it, because I knew not how to do it right. But these sisters pulled her by the arms out of my chamber, telling her she should do her own business.* I let it

* Ungrateful creatures, hard hearted, and instigated by a wicked Ecclesiastic to be more so! See the note at the end of Chap. VIII

quietly pass, without making any objection to it. The other good sister, that girl I just mentioned, grew more and more fervent, by the practice of prayer, in her dedication of herself to the Lord, more and more tender in her sympathy with me, which irritated this Ecclesiastic; insomuch that, after all his impotent attempts here, he went off to Annecy, in order to sow discord, and to effect more mischief to Father la Combe.

CHAPTER VI.

He went directly to the Bishop of Geneva, who till then had manifested much esteem and kindness for me, and persuaded him, "that it would be proper to secure me to that house, to oblige me to give up to it the annual income I had reserved to myself; and to engage me thereto, by making me prioress." He had gained such an ascendant over the Bishop, that the people in the country called him the *little Bishop*. Wherefore he drew him to enter heartily, and with zeal, into this proposition, and to resolve to bring it about, whatever it should cost him.

The Ecclesiastic, having so far carried his point, and being swelled with his success in this first essay, no longer kept any measures in regard to me. He began with causing all the letters which I sent, and which were sent to me, to be stopt; in order to have it in his power to make what impressions he pleased on the minds of others, and that I should neither be able to know it, nor defend myself, nor to give or send to my friends any account of the manner in which I was treated. One of the maids I had brought

wanted to return, as in this place she could have no rest. So there remained to me no more than one, who was infirm, and besides too much taken up with many things, to help me in any. As Father la Combe was to come for the retreats, I thought he would soften the violent spirit of this man, and that he would give me proper advice.

In the mean time they proposed to me the engagement, and the post of prioress. I answered, "that as to the engagement, it was impossible for me, since my vocation was elsewhere. And I could not regularly be the prioress, till after passing through the noviciate, in which they had all served two years, before their being engaged; that when I should have done as much, I should see how God would inspire me." The prioress answered me pretty tartly, "that if I would ever leave them, it were best for me to do it immediately." Yet I did not offer to retire, but continued still to act as usual. However I saw the sky gradually thickening, and storms gathering on every side. The prioress then affected a milder air. She assured me, "that she had a desire, as well as I, to go to Geneva; that I should not engage, but only promise her to take her with me, if I went thither." She pretended to place a great confidence in me, and professed a high esteem for me. As I am very free, and have nothing but uprightness, I let her know, "that I had no attraction for the manner of life of the new catholicks, by reason of the intrigues from without. Several things did not please me, because I wanted them to be upright in every thing." She signified, "that she did not consent to such things, but because that Ecclesiastic told her, they were necessary to give the house a credit in distant

parts, and to draw charities from Paris." I answered, "that if we walked uprightly God would never fail us. He would sooner do miracles for us." I remarked to her, "that when, instead of sincerity, they had recourse to artifice, charity grew cold, and kept herself shut up. It is God who inspires charity: how then is it to be drawn by disguises?"

Soon after Father la Combe came about the retreats. This was the third and last time that he came to Gex. The prioress, after she had been tampering a good deal with me hereupon, having wrote him a long letter before his coming, and received his answer, which she shewed me, now went to ask him whether she should one day be united to me at Geneva. He answered with his usual uprightness, "Our Lord has made it known to me that you shall never be established at Geneva." And soon after she died. When he had uttered this declaration, she appeared enraged against both him and me, after a surprising manner. She went directly to that Ecclesiastic, who was in a chamber with the house-steward; and they took their measures together to oblige me either to engage or retire. They thought that I would sooner engage than retire; and they narrowly watched my letters.

He requested Father la Combe, which was only with a design to lay snares for him, to preach; which he did on this text, "The king's daughter is beautiful within." That Ecclesiastic, who was present with his confident, said, "it was preached against him, and was full of errors." He drew up eight propositions, and inserted in them what the other had not preached, adjusting them as maliciously as ever he could, and sent them to one of his friends at Rome, to get them examined there by the sacred congrega-

tion, and by the inquisition. Though he had very ill digested them, at Rome they were pronounced good. That greatly disappointed and vexed him. After having been treated by the Ecclesiastic in this manner, and opprobriously reviled by him in the most offensive terms, the Father, with much mildness and humility, told him, "that he was going to Annecy about some affairs of their convent; and that if he had any thing to write to the Bishop of Geneva, he would take care of his letter." He desired him then to wait a while, as he was going to write. The good father had the patience to wait above three hours, without hearing from him; though the other had treated him exceedingly ill, so far as to snatch out of his hands a letter I had given him for that worthy hermit I have mentioned. Hearing he was not gone, but was still in the church, I went to him, and begged him to send to see if the other's packet was ready; because the day was so far gone, that he would be obliged to lodge by the way. When the messenger arrived, he found a servant of the Ecclesiastic on horseback, ordered to go full speed, to be at Annecy before the Father. He then returned an answer, "that he had no letters to send by him." This was so contrived that he might gain time to prepossess the bishop for his purposes. Father la Combe then set off for Annecy, where, when he arrived, he found the bishop prepossessed, and in an ill humour.

Here the following Discourse passed between them.

Bishop. "My father, you must absolutely engage this lady to give what she has to the house at Gex, and make her prioress of it.

Father la Combe. "My Lord, you know what

she has told you herself of her vocation, both at Paris and in this country. I therefore do not believe that she will engage. Nor is there any likelihood that, after having quitted her all, in the hope of entering Geneva, she should engage elsewhere, and thereby put it out of her power to accomplish the designs of God in regard to her. She has offered to stay with those sisters as a boarder. If they are willing to keep her as such, she will remain with them: if not, she is resolved to retire into some convent, till God shall dispose of her otherwise.

Bishop. "My father, I know all that; but I likewise know that she is so very obedient, that if you order her to do it, she will assuredly do it.

F. la Combe. "It is for that reason, my Lord, that one ought to be very cautious in the commands which one lays on her: can I induce a foreign lady, who for all her subsistence has nothing but a small pittance she has reserved to herself, to give up that in favour of a house which is not yet established, and perhaps never will be? If the house happen to fail, or be no longer of use, what shall that lady live on? Shall she go to the hospital? And indeed this house will not long be of any use, since there are no protestants in any part of France near it.

Bishop. "My Father, these reasons are good for nothing. If you do not make her do what I have said, I will degrade and suspend you." This manner of speaking somewhat surprised the father, who well enough understood the rules of suspension, which are not executed on such things. He replied,

F. la Combe. "My Lord, I am ready, not only to suffer the suspension, but even death, rather than do

any thing against my honour, or against my conscience." Having said that, he retired.

He directly sent me this account by an express, to the end that I might take proper measures thereupon. I had no other course to take, but to retire into a convent. I received a letter informing me that the Nun to whom I had entrusted my daughter was fallen sick, desiring me to go to my daughter for some time. I shewed this letter to the sisters of our house, telling them, "I had a mind to go; but that if they ceased to persecute me, and would leave in peace, Father la Combe, (who passed for the Apostle of the country, on account of the wonderful good done in his missions) I would return as soon as the mistress of my daughter should be recovered." Instead of this, they persecuted me more violently, wrote to Paris against me, stopt all my letters, and sent libels against me round the country.

The day after my arrival at Tonon, Father la Combe set off for the valley of Aoust,* to preach there in the Lent. He had come to take leave of me, and told me, "he should go from thence to Rome, and perhaps not return, as his superiors might detain him there; that he was sorry to leave me in a strange country, without succour, and persecuted of every one." I replied, "My father, that gives me no pain. I make use of the creatures for God, and by his order. Through his mercy, I do very well without them, when he withdraws them; and I am very well content never to see you, if such is his will, and to abide under persecution." He said, "he went

* Aoust a Duchy in Piedmont, at the foot of the Alps, in the North-east of Italy, situate on the river Doria, 65 miles South-east of Geneva and 50 miles north of Turin, subject to the king of Sardinia.

off well satisfied to see me in such a disposition." He then took his leave and departed.

As soon as I got to the Ursulines, a priest very aged, a pious man, who for twenty years past had not come out of his solitude, came to find me. He told me, "that he had had a vision relative to me; that he had seen a woman in a boat on the lake; and that the Bishop of Geneva, with some of his priests, exerted all their efforts to sink the boat she was in, and to drown her; that he continued in this vision, above two hours with pain of mind, that it seemed sometimes as if this woman were quite drowned, as for some time she quite disappeared; but afterwards she appeared again, and ready to escape the danger, while the Bishop never ceased to pursue her. This woman was always equally calm; but he never saw her entirely free from him. From whence I conclude that the Bishop will persecute you without intermission."*

* I had an intimate friend, wife of that governor, of whom I have made some mention. As she saw I had quitted every thing for God, she had a warm desire to follow me. With diligence did she dispose of all her effects, and settle her affairs, in order to come to me; but when she heard of the persecution, she was discouraged from coming to a place, from which she probably thought I should be obliged to retire; and soon after she died.†

* It appears that she was an instrument in the Lord's hand, in this place, viz. Tonon, of great spiritual benefit to several young women of the village, from what she occasionally mentions farther on, viz. in Chap. 18.

† See Part I. Chap. XX.

CHAPTER VII.

AFTER F. la Combe was gone, the persecution raised against me became more violent. The Bishop of Geneva yet shewed me some civilities, as well to try whether he could prevail on me to do what he desired, as to sound how things passed in France, and to prejudice the minds of the people there against me, always hindering me from receiving the letters sent me. The Ecclesiastic and his friend had twenty-two intercepted letters, opened on their table. There was one wherein was sent me a Letter of Attorney to sign, of immediate consequence. They were obliged to put it under another cover, and send it to me. The Bishop wrote to F. la Mothe, and had no difficulty to draw him into his party. That Father was displeased with me on two accounts: first, that I had not settled on him a pension, as he expected, and as he roughly told me several times: and secondly, that I did not take his advice in every thing; beside some other interests he had in view. He at once declared against me. The Bishop made him his confident: and it was he who uttered and spread abroad the reports about me, which they sent him. They imagined, as was supposed, that I should annul the donation I had made, if I returned; that, having the support of friends in France, I should find the means of breaking it; but in that they were much mistaken; for I had no thought of loving any thing else than the poverty of Jesus Christ. For some time yet the Father acted with caution towards me. He wrote me some letters,

which were addressed to the Bishop of Geneva : and and they agreed so together, that he was the only person from whom I received any letters, to which I returned very moving answers ; yet he, instead of being touched with them, became only more irritated against me.

The Bishop continued to treat me with a shew of respect : and yet at the same time he wrote to many persons at Paris, as did also the Sisters of the house to all those persons of piety who had written letters to me, to bias them as much as possible against me, and to avoid the blame which ought naturally to fall upon them, for having so unworthily treated a person who had given up every thing to devote herself to the service of that diocese ; and for not having ill-treated me till after I had done this, and was not in a condition to return into France. There was scarce any kind of false or fabulous story likely to gain any credit, which they did not invent to cry me down. Beside my having no way to make the truth known in France, our Lord inspired me with a willingness to suffer every thing, without justifying myself ; so that in my case nothing was heard but condemnation, without any vindication. It was not difficult to impose this harsh usage on one who did not defend herself.

I was in this convent, and had seen Father la Combe no farther than I have mentioned ; and yet they circulated a report " that I travelled with him ; that he had taken me with him in a coach to Geneva ; that the coach had overset ;" and a hundred things, as foolish as malicious : Father la Mothe spread all this, whether he thought it true or otherwise. He should however have concealed such things, had he thought them really true. But what say I, and how do I

wander? Was it not that God permitted him and his brother to be imprest with these and other things, and believing them true, to publish them without scruple? As to the latter, I think he believed it only on his brother's report, who represented them as real facts; and who reported further, "that I had been on horse-back behind Father la Combe;" whereas I had never ridden behind any man. All these calumnies turned into ridicule persons who had been esteemed before as saints. Now what cause had I given to any one to speak after that manner? I was in a convent a hundred and fifty leagues from Father la Combe; and yet they did not cease to publish, both of him and me, the most scandalous stories, utterly void of truth.

For some time I was ignorant of all this. As I knew that all my letters were kept from me, I ceased to wonder at receiving none. I lived in this house with my little daughter in a sweet repose, which was a very great favour of Providence to me; for my daughter had forgot her French, and among the little girls from the mountains had contracted a wild look and disagreeable manners. Her wit, sense and judgment were indeed surprising, and her disposition exceeding good. There were only some little fits of peevishness, which they had caused to rise in her, through certain contrarieties out of season, and through caresses ill applied, for want of knowing the proper manner of education. But the Lord provided in regard to her, as I shall tell. During this time my mind was preserved calm and resigned to God. Great was my silence; and for some time I had leisure to taste of, and to enjoy the Divinity in my little cell: afterwards that good Sister almost continually interrupted me; and I answered every thing she

desired of me, both out of condescension, and from a principle which I had to obey like a child.

When I was in my apartment, without any other director than our Lord by his Spirit, however favoured therein, as soon as one of my little children came to knock at my door, he required me to admit the interruption. He shewed me that it is not the actions in themselves which please him, but the constant ready obedience to every discovery of his will, even in the minutest things, with such a willingness, as not to adhere to any thing, but still to turn with him at every call. My soul was then, I thought, like a leaf, or a feather, which the wind causes to move what way soever it pleases; and the Lord never suffers a soul so dependent on, and dedicated to him, to be deceived.

Most part of men appear to me very unjust, who readily resign themselves to another man, and look upon that as prudence. They confide in men who are nothing, and boldly say, "Such a person cannot be deceived:" and if one speak of a soul wholly resigned to God, which follows him faithfully, they cry out aloud, "That person is deceived with his resignation." Oh my divine Love! Dost thou want either strength, or fidelity, or love, or wisdom, to conduct those who trust in thee, and who are thy dearest children? I have seen men bold enough to say, "Follow me, and you will not be misled." How sadly are those men misled themselves by their presumption! And how much sooner should I go to him who would be afraid of misleading me; who, trusting neither to his learning nor experience, would rely upon God only!

Our Lord shewed me, in a dream, two ways by

which souls steer their course, under the figure of two drops of water. The one appeared to me of an unparallelled beauty, brightness and purity, the other to have also a brightness, yet full of little fibres or streaks; both good to quench thirst; the former altogether pleasant, but the latter not so perfectly agreeable. By the former is represented *the way of pure and naked Faith*, which pleases the Spouse much, it is so pure, so clear from all *Self-love*. The way of openings or gifts is not so; and yet it is that in which many enlightened souls walk, and into which they had drawn Father la Combe. But God shewed me that he had given him to me, to draw him into one more pure and perfect. I spoke before the Sisters, he being present, of *the way of Faith*, how much it was more glorious to God, and advantageous for the soul, than all those gifts, openings and assurances which ever cause the soul to live to itself. This discouraged them at first, and him also. I saw they were pained, as they have confessed to me since. I said no more of it at that time. But as he is a person of great humility, he bade me unfold what I had wished to say to him. I told him a part of my dream of the two drops of water; yet he did not then enter into what I said, the time for it being not yet come: but when he came to Gex, to make the retreats, our Lord made known to me, as I was at prayer in the night, that I was to him as a Mother, and he to me as a Son. I told him the circumstances of a certain time past; and he recollected that it was the time of so extraordinary a touch with which the Lord favoured him, that he was quite overwhelmed with contrition. This gave him such an interior renovation, that having retired to pray, in a very ar-

dent frame of mind, he was filled with joy, and seized with a powerful emotion, which made him enter into what I had told him *of the way of Faith*. I give these things, as they happen to come to my remembrance, without carrying them on in order.

To resume my history. As soon as I had left Gex, they began strangely to persecute that good girl who had given herself to God, and for whom all the tragedy was acted. The Ecclesiastic assaulted her more violently than ever; and, the better to succeed in it, he gave her a hideous description of me, in order to destroy effectually all the esteem she had for me, and to induce her to follow his directions: but though she always confessed to him, she never would enter into any thing more particular with him. On the other hand he represented her friendship with, and the regard she had for me, as frightful crimes. They endeavoured to force her to say what was not true, and harrassed her exceedingly, without allowing her any relaxation. The Bishop of Geneva wrote to her to put all her confidence in that Ecclesiastic. She said that, in the extremities of her anguish, she saw me every night in her dreams; that I encouraged her to suffer, and told her what it would be proper for her to answer. As there are among them no vows of obedience, nor any particular prohibitions, she found means to write me a billet (or short letter) but they intercepted it. There was nothing in it but a little of the flow of hearty affection, and christian friendship. The Ecclesiastic refused her absolution and the communion, for a month, on account of this billet. At the same time the Sisters on the other hand imposed on her very great hardships. We could not have any commerce together: nevertheless the Lord

still supported her, and strengthened her to suffer patiently.

After Easter, in the year 1682, the Bishop came to Tonon. I had occasion to speak to him, which when I had done, our Lord so directed my words that he appeared thoroughly convinced: but the persons, who had influenced him before, returned to the charge. He then pressed me very much to return to Gex, and to take the place of Prioress. I gave him the reasons against it which I have mentioned before. I then appealed to him, as a Bishop, desiring him to take care to regard nothing but God in what he should say to me. He was struck into a kind of confusion: and then said to me, "Since you speak to me in such a manner, I cannot advise you to it. It is not for us to go contrary to our vocations; but do good, I pray you, to this house." I promised him to do it; and having received my pension, I sent them a hundred Pistoles, with a design to continue doing the same as long as I should be in the diocese. The Bishop said to me further, "I love Father la Combe. He is a true servant of God: and he has told me many things to which I was forced to assent; for I felt them in myself: but *added he*, when I say so, they tell me I am mistaken, and that before the end of six months he will run mad." It was the discontented Friar, the intimate friend of the Ecclesiastic, who had said this to him. I was astonished at his weakness. He told me, "he liked well the Nuns, who had been under the care and instruction of Father la Combe, finding them to come up fully to what he had heard of them." From thence I took occasion to tell him, "that in every thing he ought to refer himself to his own breast, or to the instructions

there immediately received, and not to others." He agreed to what I said, and acknowledged it to be right: and yet no sooner was he returned than he re-entered into his former dispositions. He sent the same Ecclesiastic to tell me that I must engage myself at Gex; and that this was his sentiment. I answered, by that Ecclesiastic, that I was determined to follow the counsel he had given me, when he had spoken to me *as from God*, since now they made him speak only *as man*.*

CHAPTER VIII.

My soul was in a state of entire resignation, and very great content, in the midst of such violent tempests. Those persons came to tell me a hundred extravagant stories against Father la Combe. The more they said to me to his disadvantage, the more esteem I felt for him. I answered them, "Perhaps I may never see him again; but I shall ever be glad to do him justice. It is not he who hinders me from

* M. Guion had told the Bishop (page 199) that "she had no vocation for Gex but for Geneva." After her long and careful preparations for going thither (with all the concurrent signs, and sense of many pious persons, of her call thereto,) poor woman! she seems to have been turned aside. Such a notion prevailed in that most artful church of Rome, of the duty of obedience to superiors, that hence she seems to have given up her own sense, received from a higher power, even the spirit of God, to that of a mortal invested with a title, as she acknowledges (page 213.) Hence she fell into a state of suffering obscurity, and long continued in it; yet in meekness and patience. She could make no way for herself, to any good purpose; but providence at length opened a way for her to come out, and to render signal service to many souls, through the invitation of the Marchioness of Prunai, particularly in and about the city of Grenoble.

engaging at Gex. It is only because I know it to be none of my vocation." They asked me, "Who could know that better than the Bishop?" They farther told me, "I was under a deception, and my state was good for nothing." That gave me no uneasiness, having referred to God the care of requiring, and of executing what he requires, and in whatever manner he requires it.

A soul in this condition seeks nothing for itself, but all for God. Some may say, "What then does this soul?" It leaves itself to be conducted by God's providences and creatures. Outwardly its life seems quite common; inwardly it is wholly resigned to the divine will. The more every thing appears adverse, and even desperate, the more calm it is, in spite of the annoyance and pain of the senses and of the creatures, which, for some time after the new life, raise some little clouds and obstructions, as I have already signified. But when the soul is entirely passed into its original Being, all these things no more cause any separation or partition. It finds no more of that impurity which came from self-seeking, from a human manner of acting, from an unguarded word, from any warm emotion or eagerness, which caused such a mist, as it then could neither prevent nor remedy, having so often experienced its own efforts to be useless, and even hurtful, as they did nothing else but still more defile it. There is in such case no other way or means of remedy, but in waiting till *the sun of righteousness* dissipate those fogs, as the whole work of purification comes from God only. Afterwards this conduct becomes natural: and then the soul can say with the royal prophet, "Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear:

though war should rise against me, in him will I confide." For then, though assaulted on every side by evil spirits, it continues fixed as a rock. Having no will but for what God sees meet to order, be it what it may, high or low, great or small, sweet or bitter, honour, wealth, life or any other object, what can shake its peace? It is true, our nature is so crafty that it works itself into every thing; and a *selfish sight* is like the basilisk; it destroys.

Trials are suited to the state of the soul, whether conducted by lights, gifts, or ecstacies, &c. or by the entire destruction of self in *the way of naked faith*. Both these states are found in St. Paul. He tells us, "And lest I should be exalted above measure, through the abundance of revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me." He prayed thrice, and it was said to him, "My grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness." He proved also another state when he thus expressed himself, "Oh wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" To which he replies, "I thank God, *it is done*, through Jesus Christ our Lord." It is he who conquers death in us through his own life. Then there is no longer a sting in death, or thorn in the flesh, capable of paining or hurting any more.

At first indeed, and for a pretty long time after, the soul sees that *nature* wants to take some part with it in its trials: and then its fidelity consists in withholding it, without allowing it the least indulgence, till it leave every thing to go on with God in purity as it comes from him. Till the soul be in this condition, it always sullies, by its own mixture, the opera-

tion of God; like those rivulets which contract the corruption of the places they pass through; but, flowing in a pure place, they then remain in the purity of their source. Unless God through experience make known this conduct to the soul, it can never comprehend it.

Oh, if souls had courage enough to resign themselves to the work of purification, without having any weak and foolish pity on themselves, what a noble and happy progress would they make! But few are willing to lose the earth. If they advance some steps; as soon as the sea is ruffled, they become dejected, they cast anchor, and often desist from the prosecution of the voyage. Such disorders does a love of selfish interest occasion. It is of consequence not to look too much at one's own state, not to lose courage, not to afford any nourishment to *self-love*, which is so deep rooted, that its empire is not easily demolished. Often the idea which a man conceives of the greatness of his advancement in divine experience makes him wish it to be seen and known of men, and to wish to see the very same perfection in others. He conceives too low ideas of others, and too high of his own state. Then it becomes a pain to him to converse with people too human; whereas a soul truly mortified and resigned would rather converse with the worst, by the order of Providence, than with the best of its own choice; wishing only to see or to speak to any as Providence directs, knowing well that all beside, far from helping, only hurt it, or at least prove very unfruitful to it.

What then renders this soul so perfectly content? It neither knows, nor wants to know any thing but what God calls it to. Herein it enjoys divine con-

tent, after a manner vast, immense, independent of exterior events; more satisfied in its humiliation, and in the opposition of all creatures, by the order of Providence, than on the throne of its own choice.

Oh thou who alone conductest these souls, and who canst teach ways so hidden and lost, so contrary to *the usual spirit of devotion*, full of itself and its own virtues; bring hither souls innumerable, which may love thee in the utmost purity. Every other love, however vehement and ardent, is not the pure love, but a love mixed with selfishness. These souls are the delight of God, *who delights to be with the children of men*, (Prov. viii. 31.) that is with souls child-like and innocent, such as are set free from pride, ascribing to themselves only nothingness and sin. They are one in God to such a degree, that they look at him only, and every thing else in him. Beautiful is that passage of Jeremiah, "He sitteth alone and keepeth silence, because he hath borne his yoke upon him." (Lam. iii. 28.)

What makes the perfection of one state, is only the weak and imperfect beginning of that which follows it, as in the mounting up from a lower class to a higher. The child's state has its beauties and charms in its season, as have all the succeeding stages of the divine life, when rightly disposed and directed. St. Paul says, *The Law was our School-master to bring us unto Christ*, (Gal. iii. 29.) But when we are come to him, that master is then rendered of no use. It is he who brings into *the perfect liberty of the Sons of God*, which liberty flows from the Spirit of God. But what are those souls designed for, which are so dear to him? *To be conformed to the image of his Son.* (Rom. viii. 29. 30.)

It is here that the apostolic life begins. But is every one called to that state? Very few, so far as I can comprehend; and of the few that are called to it, fewer still walk in true purity. There is a way of lights, or of gifts and graces, a holy life, in which the creature appears all admirable: as this life is more apparent, it is also more esteemed of such as have not the purest light. The souls which walk in the other path are very little known; or for a long time at least, as it was with Jesus Christ himself, till the last years of his life. Oh if I could express what I conceive of this state! But I can only stammer about it. I have wandered far from my story, but am not capable of doing otherwise.

CHAPTER IX.

BEING, as I have said, with the Ursulines at Tonon, after having spoken to the Bishop of Geneva, and seeing how he changed, just as others turned him, I wrote to him and to Father la Mothe: but all my pains were useless. The more I endeavoured to accommodate, the more the Ecclesiastic tried to confound. I then ceased to meddle.

I had a dream that I drew a cord which seemed at first of diamond: but afterwards it appeared to be of iron*. I saw storms coming on every side; yet I rested in a profound peace, waiting for the stroke

* The interpretation of this Dream appears easy. The Bishop of Geneva treated her with honour at first, while he was open to good impressions, and her words had some effect on his mind: but afterward, debased by corrupt Ecclesiastics, and seduced into sinister views, he turned an apostate, and after that became her bitter and implacable persecutor.

which I could not avoid. I beheld the tempest descend impetuously, without my having done the least thing to contribute to it, or seeing any thing for me to do but peaceably to suffer. One day I was told that the Ecclesiastic had won over that good girl whom I so dearly loved. So strong a desire I had had for her perfection that it had cost me much. I should not have felt the death of a child so much as her loss: at the same time I was told how to hinder it; but that human way of acting was repugnant to my inward sense; and these words were put into my heart, *Except the Lord build the House, &c.*

And indeed he provided herein himself, hindering her from yielding to this deceitful man, after a manner to be admired, and very thwarting to the designs of him and his associates. As long as I was with her she still seemed wavering and fearful: but oh the infinite goodness of God, to preserve without us what without him we should lose! I was no sooner separated from her but she became immovable.

As for me, there scarce passed a day but they treated me with new insults: their assaults came on me unawares. The new Catholicks, by the instigation of the Bishop of Geneva, the Ecclesiastic, and the Sisters at Gex, stirred up all the persons of piety against me. I had but little uneasiness on my own account. If I could have had it on any, it would have been on that of Father la Combe, whom they vilely aspersed, though he was absent. They even made use of his absence to overset all the good he had done in the country, by his missions and pious labours, which was inconceivably great. At first I was too ready to vindicate him, thinking it justice to do it. I did not do it at all for myself; and our Lord shewed me that I

must cease doing it for him, in order to leave him to be more thoroughly annihilated; because from thence he would draw a greater glory, than ever he had done from his own reputation.

Every day they invented some new slander. No kind of stratagem, or malicious device in their power, did they omit. They came to tease, and to surprise me in my words: but God guarded me so well, that therein they only discovered their own malevolence. I had no consolation from the creatures. The Sister who had the care of my daughter behaved roughly to me. Such are the persons who regulate themselves only by their gifts and openings. When they do not see things presently succeed, as they regard them only by their success, and are not willing to have the affront of their pretensions being thought uncertain, and liable to mistake, they seek *without* for supports. As for me who pretended to nothing, I thought all succeeded well, inasmuch as all tended to self-annihilation. On another side, the maid I had brought, and who had stayed with me, grew tired out. Wanting to go back again, she stunned me with her complaints, thwarting and chiding me from morning till night, upbraiding me with what I had left, and coming to a place where I was good for nothing. I was obliged to bear all her ill humours, and the clamours of her tongue.

F. la Mothe wrote to me that I was a rebel to my Bishop, staying in his diocese, only to give him pain. Indeed, I saw there was nothing for me to do here, so long as the Bishop should be against me. I did what I could to gain his good-will; but it was impossible on any other terms than the engagement he demanded, and that I knew to be my duty not to do. This

joined to the poor education of my daughter, affected my heart. When any glimmering of hope appeared, it soon vanished; and a sort of despair caused my strength.

During this time Father la Combe was at Rome, where he was received with so much honour, and his doctrine so highly esteemed, that the sacred congregation was pleased to take his *sentiments* on some points of doctrine, which were found to be just, and so clear, that it followed *them*. Mean while the Sister would take no care of my daughter, and when I took care of her, she was displeased. I was not able, by any means, to prevail on her to promise me to try to prevent her contracting bad habits. However I hoped that Father la Combe, at his return, would bring every thing into order, and renew my consolation. Yet I left it all to God.

As it was known in the country that I was among the Ursulines at Tonon, that I had left Gex, and was very much persecuted, Monsieur de Monpezat, Archbishop of Sens, who had a great regard for me, hearing that my sister, an Ursuline of his diocese, was obliged to go to the waters, on account of a paralytic complaint, gave her his consent to go thither, as also into the diocese of Geneva to reside with me, or to bring me back with her. Accordingly she came in the month of July, 1682, and, (through the favour of Providence) brought a maid for me to instruct and to wait upon me. This fell out very seasonably for the tuition of my daughter, and for her improvement in reading. I had taught her already to read the Bible. But while I had left her, they had given her an accent very disagreeable. My sister recovered her from it: but she and the other whose care she

was under fell out violently. I laboured to reconcile them, but to little purpose. My sister imagined I had more affection for that Nun than for her, which was far from being the case. For I had myself a great deal to suffer from her which I said nothing of. It was unpleasant to me to see discord where I enjoyed peace. The discontented maid only made bad worse. She entertained my sister with her vexations. It is true, my sister practised virtue; but she could not forbear thinking it hard that she, being a Nun advanced in years, and a stranger, should submit to one who was yet in her noviciate, in her own house, and of a very low birth. I reminded her what Jesus Christ had suffered. I succeeded better with my sister, who was not very spiritually-minded, than with the other, who thought herself much advanced in gifts and openings. When this latter had once conceived any thing, it was next to impossible to undeceive her.

By the instance of this Nun I saw clearly that it is not great gifts which sanctify, unless they be accompanied with a profound humility; and that death to every thing is infinitely more beneficial; for this very maid who thought herself at the summit of perfection, has discovered since, by the trials which have befallen her, that she was yet very far from it. Oh my God, how true it is that we may have of thy gifts, and yet be very imperfect and full of ourselves!

How straight is the gate which leads to a life in God! How little and stript of every thing one must be to pass through it, it being nothing else but death to ourselves! But when passed through it, what enlargement do we find! David saith, (Psalm xviii. 19.)

"He brought me forth into a large place." And what is this but that infinite Being, in whom all other beings terminate? And it was through humiliation and abasement that he was brought hither.

Father la Combe, on his arrival, came to see me. The first thing he said was about his own weakness, and that I must return. He added, "that all seemed dark, and no likelihood that God would make use of me in this country." The Bishop of Geneva wrote to Father la Mothe to get me to return. That Father wrote to me to do it. The first Lent which I passed with the Ursulines, my health was much impaired, but great was my inward joy. It was a thing somewhat particular to see many good creatures, who did not know me, love and pity me; and all the rest enraged against me, and most of them on reports entirely false, neither knowing me, nor why they so hated me. To swell the stream of affliction yet more, my daughter fell sick and likely to die: there was little hope of her life when her mistress also fell ill. My soul, leaving all to God, continued to rest in a quiet and peaceable habitation. O principal and sole Object of my love! Were there never any other reward of what little services we do, or of the marks of homage we render to thee, than this fixed state above all the vicissitudes in the world, is it not enough? The senses indeed are sometimes ready to start aside, and to run off like truants; but every trouble flies before the soul which is entirely subjected to God. In speaking of a fixed state, I do not mean one which can never decline or fall, that being only in Heaven. I call it fixed and permanent, compared with the states which have pre-

ceded it, which were full of vicissitudes and variations. I will not exclude a state of suffering in the senses, or arising from some superficial impurity, which remains to be done away, and which one may compare to gold *refined in its substance*, which yet may contract spots. That gold has no more need to be purified in the fire, having undergone that operation; but needs only to be cleansed without. So it seemed to be with me at that time.

There is also a pain in this state, which is inflicted of God. All the crosses and troubles from without do no more to it than only graze the skin, when compared to this. The soul which is redeemed both from every resistance of the divine Will, and from every selfish practice even of good, has nothing more to fear, or to suffer, from men or devils, though they discharge all their fury on it. Against such a soul indeed all hell is stirred up, and yet it suffers little by all this. Nor could these have any power, *were it not given them from above.* Jesus Christ bore all the avenging justice of God: and it needed God to bear that weight. So it needs a soul transformed, and passed into God, to bear the weight of the Father's justice. Such are the souls destined to be victims hereof, and *to fill up what is behind of the Sufferings of Christ, for his Body's sake which is the Church*, (Col. i. 24.) But what is there behind of his Sufferings, since he himself said, "It is finished," (John, xviii. 19.) except the extension thereof in his members? Jesus Christ, in the garden, suffered exceedingly, both from the withdrawing of God his Father, and from the weight of the sins of all mankind: so, in his members, their unity with the will

of God is so much the greater, as it is less perceived through the weight and force of their sufferings.

CHAPTER X.

My daughter had the small-pox and the purples. They sent for a physician from Geneva, who gave her over. Father la Combe then came in to confess her. He gave her his blessing; and soon after she wonderfully recovered. The persecutions of the new catholicks against me continued and increased: yet, for all that, I did not fail to do them all the good in my power. My daughter's mistress came often to discourse with me, but much imperfection appeared in her discourses, though they were on religious subjects. Father la Combe regulated many things in regard to my daughter, which displeased her mistress so much, that her former friendship turned into coldness. She had *grace*, but suffered *nature* too frequently to prevail. I told her my thoughts on her faults, as I was inwardly directed to do: but though, at that time, God enlightened her to see the truth of what I said, and she has been more enlightened since; yet the return of her coldness toward me ensued upon it. The debates between her and my sister grew more tart and violent. My daughter, who was only six years and a half old, by her little dexterities found the way to please them both, chusing to do her exercises twice over, first with the one, then with the other, which continued not long; for as her mistress generally neglected her, doing things at one time, and leaving them at another, she was reduced to learn only what my sister and I taught

her. Indeed the vivacity of my sister is so excessive, that, without a particular grace, it is hard to suit one's self to it: and yet she appeared to me to surmount herself in many things. Formerly I could scarce bear her manners; but I have since loved every thing in God, who has given me a very great facility to bear the faults of my *neighbour*, with a readiness to please and oblige every one, and such a compassion for their calamities or distresses as I never had before.

More easily did I bear the great faults of imperfect souls, than very little ones in such as God had begun to draw toward perfection. I feel my heart enlarged with tenderness for the first, and a certain firmness in regard to the others, not to tolerate in them faults which are so much the more dangerous, as they less distrust them on account of their subtilty. Though it seems that my miseries ought to impose silence on me, I cannot forbear, without suffering much, to reprove those souls for their defects. The more any soul is favoured with eminent grace, the more nearly it is united to me; the more violent also is the weight and suffering I feel for it, if it slip or turn aside ever so little. I discern its foundation and its failings, as if they were outwardly shewed or set before me. I mean the inward failings of the mind, for others surprise me not. This view diminishes not the esteem I have for *the persons*; but it makes me know what *they* want, and obliges me often to tell *them* it.

I have no difficulty to use condescension with imperfect persons; I should be secretly smitten if I failed therein: but with souls of grace I cannot bear this human manner of acting, nor suffer long and

frequent conversations. It is a case which few persons are capable of, and which is scarce known. Some religious persons say that these conversations are of great service. I believe that is true for one time, and not for another; that there is a time when it does hurt, especially when it is of our own choice; the human inclination corrupting every thing. The same things which would be profitable, when God, by his spirit, draws to them, become quite otherwise, when of ourselves we enter into them. This appears to me so clear, that I prefer being a whole day with the worst, in obedience to God, before being one hour with the best, only from choice and a human inclination.

The ordering of divine providence makes the whole rule and conduct of a soul entirely devoted to God. While it faithfully gives itself up thereto, it will do all things right and well, and will have every thing it wants, without its own care about it; because God, in whom it confides, makes it *every moment* do what he requires, and furnishes the occasions proper for it. God loves what is of his own order, and of his own will, not according to the idea of man or of reason, even that which has been enlightened; he hides these persons from the eyes of others, in order to preserve them in that hidden purity for himself.

But how comes it that such souls commit any faults? It is because they are not faithful in giving themselves up to *the present moment*. Often too eagerly bent on something, or wanting to be over faithful, they slide into many faults, which they can neither foresee nor avoid. Does God then leave souls which confide in him? In no wise. Sooner would he work a miracle

to hinder them from falling, if they were enough resigned to him. They may be resigned as to the will, and yet fail as to the *present moment*. Being out of the order of God they fall. They renew such falls as long as they continue out of that divine order. When they return into it all goes right and well.

Most assuredly, if such souls were faithful enough, not to let any of *the moments of the order of* God slip over, they would not thus fall. This appears to me as clear as the day. For instance, a bone put out of its place, in which the economy of divine wisdom had placed it, ceases not to give pain till it be restored into its proper order. From whence come so many troubles and miscarriages in life, but from the soul's not abiding in it's place, not content with *the order of God*, and what is afforded therein *from moment to moment?* If men rightly knew this secret, they would all be fully content and satisfied. But alas! instead of being content with what they have, they are ever wishing for what they have not; while the soul, which enters into the divine light, begins to be in Paradise. What is it that makes paradise? It is *the order of God*, which renders all the saints infinitely content, though very unequal in glory. From whence comes it that so many poor men are so contented; and kings who abound so unhappy? It is because the man, who is not content with what he has, will never be without wrong desires; and he who desires what he has not, or cannot have, can never be content.

All souls have more or less of strong and ardent desires, except those which are in *the divine moment*. Some have good desires, as to suffer martyrdom, in order to go to God; and others for the salvation of

their neighbour. All that is excellent: but he who rests in *the divine moment*, though exempt from all these desires, is infinitely more content, and glorifies God more. Suffering is not good, but in *the moment* wherein we must suffer. Then it is in the order of God, and the desire of what one has does not accompany the thing itself. It is written concerning Jesus Christ, when he drove out of the temple those who prophaned it. "The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up." John ii. 17. It was *in that moment* of the order of God, that these words had their effect. How many times had Jesus Christ been in the temple without such a conduct? Does not he occasionally say of himself that *his hour was not yet come?*

The saints in heaven always desire God, and always possess him. It is rather an appetite, than desire, which ever increases the pleasure of enjoyment. They continually enjoy, and incessantly advance in enjoyment, discovering new beauties in God which ravish them; and yet eternity can never exhaust these treasures ever new, of that beauty which is ever ancient as well as new. There will eternally be for them new delights, and an incessant introduction into new enjoyments.

All the impetuosities which we see in inanimate creatures toward their centre, are but the shadow of the tendency of the soul towards its own. The reason thereof is taken from the eminence of the centre, which has in it a quality so much the more attracting as it is more excellent. The excellence of God being infinite, it is easy to judge of the force of its attraction; and the nobleness of the soul causes its impetuous tendency toward its centre. What causes that we do not feel in this life the strong weight of

our separation from, and this powerful attraction to our centre, is caused by the body, which, amusing itself with created objects, procures a diversion, and takes away the attention of the soul from this attracting virtue of the centre, till the inquietude of its separation hinders it from finding any peaceful rest on earth. When God has purified the creature from its faults, the pain ceases, and the soul finds then that it is in its place. But I wander immoderately.

End of the Year 1682.

CHAPTER XI.

AFTER Father la Combe was returned from Rome, well approved, and furnished with testimonials of his life and doctrine, he performed his functions of preaching and confessing as usual. To him I confessed; and he told me at first that I must return as I have mentioned. To him I gave an account of what I had done and suffered in his absence, and what care God had taken of all my concerns. I saw his Providence incessantly extended to the very smallest things. After having been several months without any news of my papers, when some pressed me to write, and blamed my neglect, an invisible hand held me back; my peace and confidence were great herein. I received a letter from the Ecclesiastic at home, which informed me that he had orders to come and see me, and bring me my papers. I had sent for a pretty considerable bundle of things from Paris for my daughter. It was lost on the lake; and I could hear no tidings of it.

I gave myself no trouble about it. I always

thought it would be found. The man who had taken the charge of it made a search after it, for a whole month, in all the environs, without hearing any news of it. At the end of three months it was brought to me, having been found in the house of a poor man, who had not opened it, nor knew who brought it thither. Once I had sent for all the money which was to serve me a whole year; the person who had been to receive cash for the bill of exchange, having put the money in two bags on horse-back, forgot that it was there, and gave the horse to a little boy to lead. The money fell from the horse in the middle of the market at Geneva. That instant I arrived, coming on the other side, and having alighted from my litter, the first thing I found was my money, in walking over it; what was surprising, a great throng was in this place, and not one had perceived it. Many such things have attended me which, to avoid prolixity, I pass by. These may suffice to shew the protection of God.

The Bishop of Geneva continued to persecute me. When he wrote to me it was with politeness and thanks for my charities at Gex: while he said to others, "I gave nothing to that house." He wrote against me to the Ursulines with whom I lived, charging them to hinder me from having any conferences with Father la Combe, *for fear of bad consequences.* The superior of the house, a man of merit, and the prioress, as well as the community, were so much irritated at this, that they could not forbear testifying it to himself. He then excused himself with a pretended respect, and with an, *I did not mean it that way.* They wrote to him "that I did not see the Father but at the confessional, and not in confer-

ence; that they were so much edified by me, as to think themselves happy in having me, and to esteem it a great favour from God." What they said out of pure charity was not pleasing to the Bishop, who, seeing they loved me in this house, said, *that I won over every body to myself, and that he wished I were out of his diocese.* Though I knew all this, and these good Sisters were troubled at it, I could have no trouble by reason of the calm establishment which I was in, the will of God rendering every thing equal to me; the creatures, however unreasonable or passionate they appear, not being regarded in themselves but in God; for an habitual faith causes every thing to be seen in God without distinction. Thus when I see poor souls so ruffled for discourses in the air, so uneasy for explanations, I pity them for their want of light. They have reasons, I know, which *self-love* causes to appear very just.

To relieve myself a little from the fatigue of continual conversation, as my body grew weak, I desired Father la Combe to allow me a retreat, and to give out that he had ordered me to make one. He told the people so; but they could hardly leave me in repose. It was then that I let myself be consumed by love all the day long. Then also I perceived the quality of a spiritual mother; for God gave me what I cannot express for the perfection of souls. This I could not hide from Father la Combe. It seemed to me as if I entered into the innermost recesses of his heart. Our Lord shewed me that he was his servant, chosen amongst a thousand, singularly to honour him; but that he would lead him through total death, and the entire destruction *of the old man*; that he would have me contribute thereto, and be instrument-

al to cause him to walk in the way in which he had led me first; in order that I might be in a condition to direct others therein, and to tell them the tracks through which I had passed; that God would have us to be conformed, and to become both one in him; that though my soul was more advanced now, yet he should one day pass beyond it, with a bold and rapid flight. God knows how I rejoiced herein, and with what joy I would see my *children* surpass their *mother* in glory.

In this retreat I felt a strong movement to write; but resisted it till I fell sick. I had nothing to write about, not one idea to begin with. It was a divine impulse, with such a fullness of grace as was hard to contain, or bear. I laid open this disposition of mine to Father la Combe. He answered me "that he had had a strong impulse to command me to write, but had not dared to do it yet on account of my weakness." I told him, "that weakness was the effect of my resistance, and I believed it would, through my writing, go off again." He asked me, "But what is it you will write?" I replied, "I know nothing of it, nor desire to know, leaving it entirely to God to direct me." He ordered me to do so. At my taking the pen I knew not the first word I should write; but when I began, suitable matter flowed copiously; and as I was writing I was relieved and grew better. I wrote an entire treatise on the interior path of Faith, under the comparison of torrents, or of streams and rivers;* and though it is pretty long, the comparison in it holds out to the end.

* This Treatise was written by her in 1683, entitled *The Torrents*. It has been twice printed in Holland, among her spiritual works, in the first Volume in 1704, and more correctly in the second Volume in 1712.

As the way wherein God conducted Father la Combe, was very different from that in which he had walked till then; which had been all light, knowledge, ardour, assurance, sentiments, but now the poor low despised path of faith, and of nakedness; he found it very hard to submit thereto; which caused me no little suffering. Who could express what it has cost my heart, before his was formed according to the will of God? The more this soul is precious in the eyes of God, the more dearly have I been obliged to pay for it. Mean time the possession which God had of my soul became every day more strong, insomuch that I often passed whole days without being able to pronounce one word; for God was pleased to make me pass wholly into him by an entire transformation. He became more and more the absolute master of my heart, to such a degree, as not to leave me a movement of my own, in order that I might continually bend to every intimation of his will. This state did not hinder me from condescending to my Sister, and the others in the house. Nevertheless the useless things with which they were taken up could not suit my state. That was what induced me to ask leave to make a retreat, to let myself be possessed of him who holds me so closely united to himself after a manner ineffable. At this time he purified me from a relick of nature very subtil and delicate, so that my soul was brought into very great purity. All partitions were utterly consumed. Then it was given me to write in a manner purely divine. All that I had written before the time of my probation, was condemned to the fire. Our Lord united me more closely in his spirit with Father la Combe. He required me to tell him my thoughts, to the very least of them, or to write them to him, as he was of

ten absent. It was a thing which I had never done before, when I might have done it more commodiously. I said with the spouse, (Cant. v. 3.) "I have put off my coat, how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet, how shall I defile them?" Must my spirit, which is so naked and empty, again be furnished and filled? And after having been subject to God only, must I become so to the creature? I could have wished to avoid it, had I been mistress of myself; but I was taken up with the thought till I had obeyed. Far from having its former purity, the heart became sullied by such thoughts, even though they were of good things: for to trouble the water with a stick of gold, or of wood, is still alike troubling it. I found that the stronger the union between us grew, the more we were united to God, and drawn off from human sentiments. I was the more constrained to forgive him nothing which was amiss, to desire the thorough destruction thereof, that God only might reign; and was obliged to tell him faithfully whatever the Lord made known to me that he required of him: and this was a hard place to pass. I was constrained to tell him the essential defects of the Sister who took care of my daughter: as he was prepossessed in her favour, from her gifts and graces which she had told him of, he rejected with displeasure what I said about her: but the Lord allowed me no rest till I told him all I thought of her, in regard to her faults. On every occasion I was forced to suffer for his infidelity. Long has been the martyrdom I have suffered on this account, and beyond whatever can be expressed concerning it.

CHAPTER XII.

Our Blessed Lord had fully determined that I should enter into, and experience all his states, beginning with the first, and going on even to the last. Reducing me even to a perfect child-like simplicity, he gave me such a wonderful obedience to my director Father la Combe, that into whatever extremity of bodily illness I was plunged, I was immediately cured at his command. I seemed to be a representative of Jesus Christ in his child's state, obedient to his Father's will. Also a sign and testimony to this good Father, who, having been hitherto conducted by *testimonies*,* could not get get out of that way. In all that was said to him, and all that God caused him to experience, he was ever seeking for some *testimonies*, reasons or demonstrations. It was the point wherein he had the most pain to die to himself, and by which he has caused me to suffer so much. Our Lord, to make him enter the more readily into what he required both of him and of me, gave him the greatest of all testimonies, which was this wonderful obedience; in order to make him see that it did not depend on me, but that God gave it me for him: when he grew strong enough to bear the loss of every testimony, and God would have him learn to walk without such helps, this obedience was taken from me, in such sort that, without an immediate attention thereto, I could no longer obey him. This was ordered to make him enter the more into

* *That is to say*, sensible Marks, perceptible Proofs and Reasons. *Editor's Note.*

death to himself, and to deprive him of the support of this testimony; for now all my efforts to revive it were useless. I was obliged to follow the internal dictates of my Sovereign. He gave me this repugnance to obey my external director; but it continued no longer than was necessary to make him lose the support he had drawn from thence, and perhaps I myself also.

I had at that time so ardent a desire for his perfection, and to see him thoroughly die to himself, that I could have wished him all the crosses and afflictions imaginable (far from pitying him in them) that might conduce to this great and blessed end. Whenever he was unfaithful, or looked at things in any other light than the true one, *viz.* to tend to this mystic death, I felt myself on the rack, which, as I had been till then so indifferent, very much surprised me. To the Lord I made my complaint, who graciously encouraged me, both on this subject and on that entire dependence on himself which he gave me, which was such, that I was like a new-born child.

My sister had brought me a maid,* whom God was willing to give me, to fashion her according to his will, not without some crucifixion to myself, (for I believe it never is to fall out, that our Lord will give me any persons without giving them wherewith to make me suffer for them) whether it be for the purpose of drawing them into a spiritual life, or never to leave me without the cross. She was one on whom the Lord had conferred very singular graces. She was in high reputation in the country, where she passed for a saint. Our Lord brought her to me, to let her,

* One of those young women who was a prisoner in the Baſtile at Paris, twelve years, when Lady Guion was there. *Editor's Note.*

see the difference of the sanctity conceived and comprised in the gifts with which she was endowed, from that which is acquired by our entire destruction, even by the loss of those same gifts, and of what we are in the esteem of men. Our Lord had given her the same dependence for me as I had in regard to Father la Combe, nevertheless with some difference.

This girl fell grievously sick. I was willing to give her all the assistance in my power, but I found I had nothing else to do but to command her bodily sickness, or the disposition of her mind; and all that I said was done. It was then that I learned what it was to command by the word, and obey by the word. It was Jesus Christ in me equally commanding and obeying.

She, however, continued sick for some time. One day, after dinner, I was moved to say to her, "Rise, and be no longer sick." She rose and was cured. The Nuns were very much astonished; and as they knew nothing of what had passed, but saw her walking, who in the morning had appeared to be at the last extremity, they attributed her disorder to vapours.

Thus are miracles operated by the annihilation of the soul, in such sort that as this soul is now become nothing, from hence nothing ought to be attributed to it. It does not say, when it feels a movement to heal, "Be thou healed in the name of Jesus Christ:" which is a power of doing miracles in the name of Christ: but here it is Christ himself who does the miracle, and who says by that person, "Be healed," and it is done. When the person says that, it is the divine Word which speaks, and effects what it speaks; the Word which spoke in the beginning, and all things were made.

I have at sundry times experienced, and felt in myself, that God respects the freedom of man, and even demands his free concurrence; for when I said, "Be healed," or, "Be free from your troubles;" if such persons acquiesced or joined therein, the Word was efficacious, and they were healed. If they doubted, or resisted, though under fair pretexts, as saying, "I shall be healed when it pleases God, I will not be healed till he wills it;" or, in the way of despair, "I will not be healed; I will not quit my condition," then the word had no effect. I felt in myself, that the divine Virtue retired in me. I experienced what our Lord said, when the woman afflicted with the issue of blood touched him, and he instantly asked, "Who touched me?" The apostles said, "Master, the multitude throng thee, and press thee; and sayest thou, Who touched me? But he replied, "It is because virtue hath gone out of me." (Luke viii. 45, 46.) Jesus Christ had caused that healing virtue to flow through me, by means of his Word: but when that virtue met not with a correspondence in the subject, I felt it suspended in its source, which gave me some pain. I should be, as it were, displeased with those persons: but when there was no resistance, but a full acquiescence, this divine Virtue had its full effect. One cannot conceive the delicacy of this healing Virtue. Although it has so much power over things inanimate, yet the least thing in man either restrains it, or stops it entirely*.

* The language of infidelity boldly pronounces, *miracles are ceased*; as if either the omnipotence of God, or his benevolence to mankind, were ceased. So formerly, when iniquity bore sway, the people said, "The Lord hath forsaken the earth; the Lord seeth not," Ezek. ix. 9.

There was a good Nun much afflicted, and under a violent temptation. She went to declare her case to a Sister whom she thought very spiritual, and in a condition capable of assisting her. But far from finding succour here, she was very much discouraged and cast down. The other despised her, and treating her with a scornful rigour, said, "Do not come near me, since you are that way." This poor girl, in a frightful distress came to me, thinking herself undone, on account of what the Sister had said to her. I consoled her, and our Lord relieved her immediately; but I could not forbear telling her, "that assuredly the other would be punished, and would fall into a state worse than hers." The Sister who had used her in such a manner came also to me, highly pleased with herself in what she had done, saying "she abhorred such tempted creatures; that as for herself, she was proof against such temptations, and that she never had had a bad thought." I said to her, "My Sister, from the friendship I have for you, I wish you the pain of her who spoke to you, and even

Among the first Christians, we find, there were diversities of gifts from the same spirit, *viz.* gifts of healing, working miracles, prophecy, discerning of spirits, &c. 1. Cor. xii. 4. 9. 10. I have no doubt at all but if men at this day were sufficiently purified, they would in like manner be eminently dignified. This I must ever believe on the behalf of that infinite wisdom and goodness, which *would have all Men to be saved* from evil, *and to come unto the knowledge of the Truth.* 1. Tim. ii. 4. The things which this divine *Truth* unfolds are such as *the natural man receiveth not; for they are foolishness unto him: Neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.* 1. Cor. ii. 4.

M. Guion had been brought through the Deeps, and had passed through the Furnace of Purification. Who then can be competent Judges of *her* Words and Works, but such as have followed Christ to the same Length and Depth? We have no other Rule to judge of Pretenders and their Pretensions by, but that which Christ has given, *viz. Ye shall know them by their fruits.* Mat. viii. 16.—*Translator.*

one still more violent." She answered me haughtily, "If you were to ask it of God for me, and I ask of him the contrary, I believe I shall be heard at least as soon as you." I answered her with great firmness, "If it be only my own interests which I ask, I shall not be heard; but if it be those of God only, and yours too, I shall be heard sooner than you are aware." That very night she fell into so violent a temptation that one equal to it has seldom been known; she continued in it a fortnight. It was then that she had ample occasion to acknowledge her own weakness, and what we should be without grace. She conceived at first a violent hatred for me, saying, *that I was the cause of her pain.* But as it served her, as the clay did to enlighten him who had been born blind, she saw very well what had brought on her so terrible a state.

I fell sick, even to extremity. This sickness proved a means to cover the great mysteries which it pleased God to operate in me. Scarcely ever was a disorder more extraordinary, or of longer continuance in its excess. I was reduced to a state of infancy, a state which appeared only to those who were capable of it. As for others, to them mine appeared only a natural or common case. I was put into a dependence on the Child Jesus, who was willing to communicate to me his own infant state, that I should bear him as such. The more I advanced the more I was freed from this dependence, as children gradually rise above such dependence as they grow up. My fever ran so high as to a delirium. I had also an imposthume at the corner of my eye very painful. At this time it broke entirely. They dressed it a long time, and probed it with an iron instrument so deep as even to

run it down to the bottom of my cheek. I had so burning a fever, and was so very weak, that it was obliged to be left to close of itself without a cure; for my emaciated body was not able to bear these operations, without being on the very point of expiring. I suffered with great patience, like a child which scarce knows what one does to it. I then experienced the strength of God joined to the weakness of a child. My natural disposition was so remote from such a deportment, that no less than a divine Power was sufficient to bring me to it. Nevertheless, I gave myself up to be led thus; for my interior state was so actuated of God, that I could not resist him. His Spirit was become the sole master in me; and made me do, or submit to, whatever he pleased; so that during this sickness, I looked very much like a child, as those about me observed. And yet our Lord gave me, with the weaknesses of a child, such a power over souls, that with a word I put them in pain, or in peace, as was necessary for their good. I saw that God made himself be obeyed, in and through me, like an absolute Sovereign. I neither resisted him nor took part in any thing. I inwardly felt a candor of soul, such as I cannot express, and quite exempt from all guile. With this I was obliged to continue to tell my thoughts, or write them, to Father la Combe, and to help him according to the light which was given me. I was often so weak that I could not lift up my head to take nourishment; and when God required me to write to him, either to help and encourage him, or to lay before him what was made known to me, I had strength given me to do it. When my letters were finished, I found myself in the same weakness. Our Lord had given

us both to understand that he would unite us by faith and by the cross. Ours then has been an union of the cross in every respect, as well by what I have made him suffer, as by what I have suffered for him. Thus it was reciprocal, and much stronger than I am able to express. The sufferings which I have had on his account were such as to reduce me sometimes to extremity, which continued for several years: for though I have been much more of my time far from him, than near him, that did not relieve my suffering, which continued till he was perfectly brought out of himself, and to the very point of submission which God required of him. This operation made him suffer pains so much the more intense, as the designs of God upon him were the greater. I felt his disposition. If he was faithful in letting SELF be destroyed, I was in a state of peace and enlargement. If he was unfaithful, in reflection or hesitation, I suffered till that was passed over. My heart had in it as it were a counterpart, or an echo, which told it all the dispositions which the Father was in. In short, to bear a soul, however distant the person may be, in all its different dispositions, and to suffer for all its resistances, is a thing very strange and mysterious.

I was much surprised to comprehend by experience, that what God required of me in thus obliging me to tell my thoughts, was to perfect me in simplicity, to make me readily yield to whatever he manifested to be his will, and to make Father la Combe enter into the same state: for whatever cross it was to me thus to tell him all my thoughts, which often so much disgusted him, as to make him desist from serving me, as he told me; yet I never forbore on this ac-

count to tell him them: and he, through submission to divine grace, at length got over all these repugnances.

CHAPTER XIII.

My sister was in no wise capable of my state. Often she took offence at it. She was displeased when I concealed it from her ever so little, though so much a stranger to it; the depth and nature of it being such, as many persons, more spiritual than she, could not have been able to comprehend; so that in this sickness I suffered much on all sides. The exercises of pain, though great, were the least. Those on the part of the creature were much greater. My highest consolations were in receiving the sacrament, and sometimes seeing Father la Combe. I had strange interruptions and crosses from my sister, as also from that Nun, and from the maid who wanted to return home. I was obliged (whatever extremity I were in) to hear their differences, which they came to tell me one after another; and they were each of them angry with me, because I would not enter into their party. They scarce allowed me any sleep; for as the fever redoubled in the night, I could only get one hour's rest. I wished to sleep a little in the day, but they would not let me, saying, *it was only to avoid speaking to them*; so that I needed very great patience to bear with them. It continued thus for more than six months. I think that was partly the cause of my delirium which held two days. Yet I complained of nothing, but suffered cheerfully as a child. Father la Combe ordered them to allow me a little repose, which they did for some days only, and soon began again.

I cannot express the mercies which God shewed me in the time of this indisposition, and the profound views of the future which he gave me. I saw that the adversary of man in great wrath, was about to excite a violent persecution against prayer, and against the persons drawn into that holy exercise. I wrote an account of all this to Father la Combe; and if he has not burned the letters, they will still serve for proofs of the truth hereof. I then comprehended what power a soul has, which is entirely annihilated. Our Lord let me see all that has since that time come to pass, as my letters then written clearly manifest.

One day as I was thinking in myself what so great a dependence was, and so pure and intimate an union, twice I saw in a dream Jesus Christ, an infant of admirable beauty; and it seemed to me that he very closely united us, saying, "It is I who unite thee to myself, and am willing that we be both one." Another time he bade me see Father la Combe, who then kept himself at some distance from me through infidelity; and with great goodness he brought him back again, willing to help me in the state of childhood, as I helped him in the state of death. He had a very great charity for me. Treating me as a real child, he often said to me, "When I am with you, I seem to myself as if I was with a child." I was constantly every ninth day reduced to extremity, and seemed on the point of death. I had, as it were, its agonies. For several hours I only breathed a long time asunder. Then all of a sudden I recovered. Death flattered me; for I had a great fondness for it; but it only appeared flying off. The father forbade me to rejoice at the prospect of death. I immediately discovered that it was an imperfection, and did it no more; remain-

ing afterwards in the utmost indifference about it. There passed so many extraordinary things in this sickness, that it would be impossible for me to relate them. God incessantly wrought miracles by Father la Combe, as well to relieve me, and give me new strength when I was at extremity, as to shew me the care he was to take of me; and the dependence which I was to have in regard to him. In my pains they treated me wrong. The remedies they gave me augmented them; but I could not put myself in pain about it. The sisters about me had much compassion for me; there was none but I who had no thought about myself.

Several times I saw in dreams Father la Mothe raising persecutions against me. Our Lord let me know that this would be the case, and that Father la Combe would forsake me in the time of persecution. This I wrote to him, and it disquieted him greatly; because he thought his heart was united to the will of God, and desirous of serving me, too much for admitting such desertion; and yet it has since been found quite true; though not with his will, but from necessity, having been himself persecuted the first.

Father la Combe, seeing me so extremely ill, prayed to the Lord to relieve me, and to lay on him part of my illness. I grew better, and he fell sick, which occasioned a great alarm in the place, because he was then to preach during Lent. He was so much followed, that people came five leagues, to pass several days there, for the benefit of his ministry. As I heard he was so sick that he was thought likely to die, I prayed in like manner to the Lord to restore his health, and enable him to preach to the people who were long-

ing to hear him. The Lord heard my prayer; and he soon recovered, to resume his pious labours.

It was in this sickness that the Lord gradually taught me that there was another manner of conversing among souls wholly his, than by speech. Thou made me conceive, oh divine word, that as thou art ever speaking and operating in a soul, though therein thou appearest in profound silence; so there was also a way of communication, in thy creatures, in an ineffable silence. I then learned a language which before had been unknown to me. I gradually perceived, when Father la Combe entered, that I could speak no more; and that there was formed in my soul the same silence in regard to him, as was formed in it in regard to God. I comprehended that God was willing to shew me that men might in this life learn the language of angels. I was gradually reduced to speak to him only in silence. It was in that that we understood each other in God, after a manner unutterable and all divine. Our hearts spoke to each other, communicating a grace which no words can express. It was like a new country, both for him and for me, but so divine that I cannot describe it. At first this was done in a manner so perceptible, *that is to say*, God penetrated us with himself, in a manner so pure and so sweet, that we passed hours in this profound silence, always communicative, without being able to utter one word. It was in this that we learned, by our own experience, the operations of the heavenly word to reduce souls into unity with itself, and what purity one may arrive at in this life. It was given to me to communicate this way to other good souls, but with this difference that, as for others, I did nothing but communicate to them the grace with which they

were filled, while near me, in this sacred silence, which infused into them a strength and grace extraordinary; but I received nothing from them: whereas with Father la Combe there was a flux and reflux of communication of grace, which he received from me, and I from him, in the greatest purity.

It was in this that I comprehended the ineffable commerce of the most holy Trinity to all the blessed; and how God, who communicates himself to them, forms in them a flux and reflux of his own divine communications; that the saints of the like degree or hierarchy return to each other these pure and blissful emanations, and further shed them on the inferior hierarchies, and that all are reduced into their first principle, from whence they flow. I saw that we were created to partake in this life the unspeakable happiness of the commerce of the celestial regions, and that it requires us to be very pure to receive God thus uninterruptedly, and to leave him to flow back into himself in that same purity. We must indeed be very pure to receive and to communicate the divine Word, and afterward to diffuse it by a flux and reflux of communication upon the other souls which God gives us. This is what fixes us in the divine unity, in which we are one in him from whom all is derived.

I saw then this hierarchic order, and these reciprocal communications, among the saints and angels of the same rank; and how this efflux spreads over those of inferior orders, and that with such a plenitude, that they are all filled according to their degree. It is to render the soul capable of these communications, that it needs to be so thoroughly and radically purified; without which it would ever remain selfish, it would always save something alive; and from

thence hinder, and not be proper for them. Beside, its capacity of reception needs to be extended, which being excessively narrowed by sin, is not in a condition, but by the force of fire, and the strokes of the hammer, to be fit for the eternal designs of God in its creation.

It was shewed me how this hierarchic order was even in this life, and that there are souls who communicate to an infinite number of other souls, without knowing it, to whom the grace of their perfection reaches; that this hierarchy will be preserved through all eternity, and that those who mutually communicate to each other will be in the like degree. It was then that I learned the secret of spiritual fruitfulness and maternity; how the Holy Spirit renders souls fruitful in himself, and that there would be given to me this way children without number, as well unknown as known. All those who are my true children are drawn in their minds at once to continue in silence when with me; and I have the like draught to impart to them in silence what God gives me for them. In this silence I discover their wants and their failings, and even communicate to them in an abundant plenitude. When they have once tasted of this manner of communication, any other becomes a burthen to them. As for me, when I make use of speech and of the pen with souls, I do it only on account of their weakness, and because either they are not pure enough for the interior communications; or because it is yet needful to use condescension, or for the regulation of outward affairs.

It was in this ineffable silence, that I comprehended how the word of Jesus Christ is found very signally realized, when he says, (Matt. xii. 50.) "Who-

soever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother;" and that I also comprehended the manner in which Jesus Christ communicated himself to his most familiar friends; and the communication of St. John, when leaning on his Lord's bosom at the supper of the passover. It was not the first time that he had seated himself that way; and it was because he was very proper to receive these communications, being the disciple of love. It was in that great banquet that Jesus Christ, as the word, flowed into John, and discovered to him his profound secrets, even how the eternal word operates. For the speech of this word in silence is the most noble and sublime of all operations. It was by this that he learned the difference between *being born of the flesh, or of the will of man, and being born of God.* (John i. 13.) The operations of the flesh are those of carnal men; those of the will of man are such as are virtuous, being done from the good disposition of the man: but those which I am speaking of are of the will of God, wherein man has no share, except the submission or consent which he gives thereto; as in the case of Mary, who said, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it unto me according to thy word."

It is thus that Jesus Christ *is the way, the truth and life;* that he comes to *enlighten every man that cometh into the world:* He came to his own; and *to as many as received him he gave power to become sons of God:* and to such only is he known in his most intimate communications.

It was this wonderful mystery which operated at the foot of the cross, when he said to his mother, "Behold thy son." and to St. John, "Behold thy mother." (John xix. 26, 27.)

Oh what admirable communications were those which passed between Mary and St. John! A communication all divine; which the Lord is willing to extend down to me, all unworthy as I am thereof, and to communicate a mother's fruitfulness, affection and tenderness, even to this poor nothing! I mean the fruitfulness of hearts and spirits.

Our Lord was willing, in order to instruct me to the bottom of this mystery, in favour of others, that the girl (she whom I have spoken of) should have need of this succour. I proved her every way; and when I was not willing that she should stay with me in silence, I saw her inward condition affected by it, and even her bodily strength fail. When I had made a sufficient number of trials hereof, to comprehend these manners of communications, her extreme necessities passed away. I began to discover, especially with Father la Combe, that the interior communication was carried on, even when he was afar off, as well as when he was near. Sometimes our Lord made me stop short, when in the midst of my occupations; and I was favoured with such a flow of grace as that which I felt when with him; which I have also experienced with many others, though not in a like degree; but more or less feeling their infidelities, and knowing their faults by inconceivable impressions, without ever having been mistaken therein.

CHAPTER XIV.

In this long malady the love of God, and of him only, made up my whole occupation, in whom I seemed so entirely lost, as to have no sight of myself

at all. It seemed as if my heart never came out of that divine ocean, having been drawn into it through deep humiliations. Oh loss which is the consummation of happiness, though all this is operated through crosses and through deaths!

Jesus, as an infant, was then all living in me; or rather it seemed as if he were alone, and I no more. Thou taught me, oh my Love, that thy state of infancy would not be the only one which I must bear. Thou imprinted on me these words, as a real state into which I must enter, (Matt. viii. 20.) "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the son of man hath not where to lay his head." This I have since experienced in all its extent, having no sure abode, no refuge among my friends, who were ashamed of me, and openly renounced me, when universally decried; nor among my relations, most of whom declared themselves my adversaries, and were my greatest persecutors; while others looked on me with contempt and indignation. My state began to be like that of Job. I might say with David, (Psal. lxix. 7, 8.—xxii. 6.—xxxi. 11.) "For thy sake I have borne reproach; shame hath covered my face; I am become a stranger unto my brethren, and an alien unto my mother's children; a reproach of men, and despised of the people."

One night when I was awake, Christ shewed me to myself, under the figure of the woman in the Revelations, (Rev. xii.) who had the moon under her feet, a crown of twelve stars upon her head, and, surrounded with the sun, being with child, cried in the pangs of childbirth. He shewed hereby that my soul was above the vicissitudes and inconstancy of events; that I was covered and penetrated with the sun of

righteousness; that the twelve stars were the fruits of this state, and the gifts of God as a crown on my head; that I was big with a fruit, which was that spirit which God would have me communicate to all my children; that the devil was that frightful dragon who would strive to devour that fruit, and to make horrible ravages over all the earth round about me; but that God would preserve this fruit that it should not be lost; (so I trust, in spite of the storm, that all I have had to say or write will be preserved) that the devil in his rage, at not succeeding in his design against the fruit, would fall the more fiercely on myself, and would raise a flood against me to swallow me up; that this flood would be that of calumny, which would rush to carry me down with rapidity; but that the earth would open itself to receive this flood; that is to say, that this calumny would gradually fall to the ground, and there die away.

He shewed me all the world in a rage against me, without any one daring to appear for me; and assured me in the ineffable silence of his eternal Word, that he would give me vast numbers of children, which I should bring forth by the cross. I left it to him to do with me whatever he pleased, esteeming my whole and sole interest to be placed entirely in his divine Will. He gave me to see how the devil was going to stir up an outrageous persecution against prayer, that it should prove the source of the same prayer, or rather the means which God would make use of to establish it. He gave me to see farther how he would guide me into the wilderness, where he would cause me to be nourished for a time, and times, and half a time. The wings, which were to bear me thither, were the resignation of my whole self to his

holy will, and the love of the same will. I think I am at present in that wilderness, separated from the whole world in my imprisonment; and I see already accomplished in part what was then shewed me. Can I ever express the mercies which my God has bestowed on me? No; they must ever remain in himself, being of a nature not to be described, by reason of their purity, and their immensity.

In my malady I was often in all appearance at the point of death. Father la Combe administered to me the extreme Unction, the Prioress of the Ursulines having desired him to do it, as their priest was then not at home. I was well satisfied to die, as was he also in the expectation of my departure. For being united in God after a manner so pure, so spiritual, death could not separate us, but on the contrary would have more closely united us. Father la Combe, who was on his knees at my bedside, remarking the change of my countenance, and how my eyes faded, seemed ready to give me up for dying; when God inspired him to put his hand over my heart, and with a strong voice, which was heard of those who were in my chamber, at that time almost full, to command Death to come no farther. Death seemed instantly to be stopped: and thus God was pleased wonderfully to raise me up again; yet for a long time I continued extremely weak, during all which he still gave me new testimonies of his love. How many times was he pleased to make use of his servant to restore me to life, when I was almost on the very point of expiring! As they saw that my sicknesses and pains did not end, they judged that the air of the lake, on which the convent was situated, was very prejudicial

to my constitution. They concluded that it would be necessary for me to remove.

During my said indisposition, our Lord put it into the heart of Father la Combe to establish an hospital in this place for poor people seized with maladies, and to institute also a committee or congregation of ladies of the charity, to furnish such as could not leave their families, to go to the hospital, with the means of subsistence during their illness, after the manner of France, there not having been yet any institution of this kind in that country. Willingly did I enter into it; and without any other fund than Providence, and some useless chambers which the gentlemen of the town gave us, we began it. We dedicated it to the holy Child Jesus, and he was pleased to give the first beds to it from the earnest-pence of my pension, which belong to him. He gave such a blessing thereto, that several other persons joined us in this charity. In a short time there were near twelve beds in it, and three persons of great piety gave themselves to this hospital to serve it, who, without any salary, consecrated themselves to the service of the poor patients. I supplied them with ointments and medicines, which were freely given to such of the poor people of the town as stood in need of them. These good ladies were so hearty in the cause, that, through their charity, and the care of the young women, this hospital was very well maintained and served. These ladies joined together also in providing for the sick, who could not go to the hospital: and I gave them some little regulations, such as I had observed when in France, which they continued to keep up with love and charity.

All these little things, which cost but little, and

which owed all their success to the blessing which God gave them, drew upon us new persecutions. The Bishop of Geneva was offended with me more than ever, especially in seeing that these small matters rendered me beloved. He said, "I won over every body." He openly declared, that "he could not bear me in his diocese," though I had done nothing therein but good, or rather God by me. He extended the persecution to those good *religious women* who had been my assistants. The Prioress in particular had her own share to bear, though it did not last long: for as I was obliged, on account of the air, to remove, after having been there about two years and a half, they were then more in peace and quietness. On the other side my sister was very weary of this house: and as the season for the waters approached, they took occasion from thence to send her away, with the maid which I brought with me, who had disturbed me exceedingly in my late illness. I only kept her whom Providence had sent me by means of my sister: and I have ever thought that God had ordered my sister's journey hither, only to bring her to me as one chosen of him, and proper for the state which it was his pleasure to cause me to bear.

While I was yet indisposed, with the Ursulines, the Bishop of Verceil, who was a particular friend of the father-general of the Bernabites, earnestly requested him to seek among the Religious, a man of merit, piety and learning, in whom he might place a confidence, and who might serve him for a prebend and for a counsellor, as his diocese had occasion for such service. The father-general at first cast his eyes on Father la Combe; yet before he absolutely engaged

him with the said Bishop, he wrote to him to know, "whether he had any objection thereto." Father la Combe replied, "that he had no other will but that of obeying him, and that he might command him herein, as he should think best in the case." He gave me advice of all this, and that we were going to be entirely separated. I was glad to find that our Lord would employ him, under a Bishop who knew him, and would be likely to do him justice. He waited for some time yet before he went, both because the Bishop was at Rome, and the six years of the Father's superiority (or oversight of the Ursulines) were not yet quite expired.

Before my coming away from the Ursulines, the good hermit I have spoken of wrote to me, earnestly entreating me to go to Lausanne*, which was only six leagues from Tonon, over the lake, because he still hoped to draw back his sister who lived there, in order to labour for her conversion. One cannot go thither to speak about religion without running some risque. As soon as I was in a condition to walk, though but feebly, I resolved to go thither. We took a boat, and I requested Father la Combe to accompany us. We got over pretty easily: but as the lake was above a quarter of a league distant from the town, I was obliged, notwithstanding my weakness, to muster up all my forces to get thither on foot, as we could not find any other means of conveyance. The boatmen bore me up as well as they could, but not sufficiently for the condition I was in. When I arrived at the town I was extremely reduced. Both Father la Combe and myself spoke to that woman,

* Lausanne, a city of Switzerland, in the canton of Bern, situate on the north side of the lake of Geneva.

but she was newly married, and declared that, if it were not in regard to her brother, from whom we delivered letters to her, she would have informed against us, as being come to debauch the Protestants. In our return we had like to have perished on the lake, in a dangerous place, where there came a tempest against us, which seemed to be going to swallow us up; if God had not protected us. Some days after, a bark foundered there, with thirty-three persons in it.

CHAPTER XV.

I THEN went off from the Urſulines, and they ſought for a houſe for me at a diſtance from the lake. There was not found any empty for me but one, which had the look of the greateſt poverty. It had no chimney but in the kitchen, through which one was obliged to paſs to go to the chamber. I took my daughter with me, and gave up the largeſt chamber for her, and the maid who was to take care of her. I was lodged in a little hole, on straw, to which I went up by a ladder. As we had no other furniture than our beds, which were quite plain and homely, I bought some dutch earthen and wooden ware. Never did I enjoy a greater content than in this little habitation which appeared so very conformable to the state of littleness of Jesus Christ: I fancied every thing better on wood than on plate. I laid in all my provisions, hoping to stay there a long time, but the enemy did not leave me long in such sweet peace. It would be difficult for me to tell the persecutions which were stirred up, even here, against me. They

threw stones in at my windows, which fell at my feet. I had got my little garden put in order. They came in the night to tear it all up, to break down the arbour and to overturn every thing in it, as if the soldiers had been there. They came to abuse me at the door all night long, using such force as if they had designed to break it open. These persons have since told who put them on such work. Though from time to time I continued my charities at Gex, I was not the less persecuted for it. They offered one person a sealed letter to cause Father la Combe to stay at Tonon, thinking he would otherwise be a support to me in the persecution; but we prevented it. I knew not then the designs of God, and that he would soon draw me from that poor solitary place, in which I had enjoyed a sweet and solid satisfaction, notwithstanding the abuses from without. I thought myself happier here than any sovereign on earth. It was, for me like a nest, and a place of repose; and Christ was willing that I should be like him. The enemy, as I have said, irritated my persecutors. They sent to desire me to go out of the diocese. All the good which the Lord had caused me to do in it was condemned, more than the greatest crimes. Those they tolerated, but me they could not endure. All this while I never had any uneasiness or repentance for my having left all, or of what I have done since; not that I was assured of having done the will of God therein: such an assurance would have been too much for me. But I was so lost that I could neither see nor regard any thing, receiving every thing alike from the hand of my God, who directed and disposed these crosses for me either in justice or in mercy.

The Marchioness of Prunai, sister of the chief secretary of state to his Royal Highness (the Duke of Savoy) and his prime minister, had sent an express from Turin, in the time of my illness, to invite me to come to reside with her; and to let me know that, "being so persecuted as I was in this diocese, I should find an asylum with her; that during that time things might grow better; that when they should be well disposed she would return with me, and join me with a friend of mine from Paris, who was willing also to come to labour there, according to the will of God." I was not at that time in a condition to execute what she desired of me, and expected to continue with the Ursulines till things should change. She then wrote to me about it no more. This lady is one of extraordinary piety, who had quitted the splendour and noise of the court for the more silent satisfaction of a retired life, and to give herself up to God. With an eminent share of natural advantages, she has continued a widow twenty-two years; and has refused every offer of marriage, to consecrate herself to our Lord entirely and without any reserve. When she knew that I had been obliged to leave the Ursulines, yet without knowing any thing of the manner in which I had been treated, she procured a letter to oblige Father la Combe to go to pass some weeks at Turin, for her own benefit, and to bring me with him thither, where I should find a refuge. All this she did unknown to us; and, as she has told us since, a superior force moved her to do it, without knowing the cause thereof. If she had deliberately reflected on it, being such a prudent lady, she probably would not have done it: for the persecutions which the Bishop of Geneva procured us in that place,

cost her many humiliations. Our Lord permitted him to pursue me, after a surprising manner, into all the places I have been in, without giving me any relaxation, though I never did him any harm; but on the contrary would have freely laid down my life for the good of his diocese.

As this fell out without any design on our part, we, without any hesitation, believed it was the will of God; and thought it might be the means of his appointment to draw us out of the reproach and persecution we laboured under, seeing myself chased on the one side, and desired on the other; it was therefore concluded that Father la Combe should conduct me to Turin, and that he should go from thence to Verceil.

Beside him I took with me a religious man of merit, who had taught theology for fourteen years past, in order to do things with the more decency, and to take away from our enemies all the subjects of slander. I also took with me a boy whom I had brought out of France. They took horses, and I took a litter for my daughter, my chamber-maid and myself; but all precautions are useless when it pleases God to permit them to be frustrated. Our adversaries immediately wrote to Paris. A hundred ridiculous stories were circulated about this journey; comedies were acted on it, things invented at pleasure, and utterly false. It was Father de la Mothe, who was so active in uttering all this stuff. Had he believed it to be true, he ought out of charity to have concealed it, and much more, being so very false. They said, "I was gone all alone with Father la Combe, strolling about the country, from province to

province," with many such fables, as weak and wicked as they were incoherent and badly put together. We suffered all with patience, without vindicating ourselves, or making any complaint: and if the subject be cooly and impartially considered, could I have done better in the condition I was in? Was it not both honourable and of real advantage for me to be with a lady of that quality, enhanced with so much merit? but passion has no eyes, and calumny is a torrent which drowns all reasons.

Scarce were we arrived at Turin, but the Bishop of Geneva wrote against us. As he could pursue us no other way, he did it by his letters. Father la Combe repaired to Verceil, and I stayed at Turin with the Marchioness of Prunai. But what crosses was I assaulted with from my own family, from the Bishop of Geneva, from the Bernabites, and from a vast number of persons besides! My eldest son came to find me out, on the occasion of the death of my mother-in-law, which was an augmentation of my troubles; but after we had heard all his accounts of things, and how they had made sale of all the moveables, chosen Guardians, and settled every article, without consulting me at all, I seemed to be there entirely useless. It was judged improper for me to return, considering the rigour of the season.

Thou alone knowest, oh my God, what I suffered; for thou didst not see it proper to make thy will known herein to Father la Combe. He said, "he had no light to direct him how to conduct me; and that I must do the best I could." The more he told me such things, the more I felt myself dependent on him, and unable to determine for myself. And thus have

we experienced our union to be *in faith and in the croſs*; for the more we were crucified the more we were united. People imagined that our union was natural and human; but God knows that we found nothing therein but the cross, death and destruction. How often did we say to each other, that if our union had been only natural, we could not have preserved it a moment among so many crosses! God knows the purity, and integrity of this union; how it was singly and entirely founded on himself. My dependence became every day greater, because I was like a little child, which neither is able, nor knows how to do any thing. When Father la Combe happened to be where I was, which was but rarely since my leaving the Urſulines, I could not be long without seeing him, as well on account of the strange trials which befell me, as of my state of childhood. If he was absent, I had no want of him, nor concern about him; nor had I the least desire of seeing him: for my necessity was not in my will or choice, nor even in any bias or inclination for him; but God was the author of it; and as he is never in any wise contrary to himself, when he took him from me he gave me no occasion or desire for him.

When I was first at Turin Father la Combe stayed there some time, waiting for a letter from the Bishop of Verceil. He took that time to go to see the Bishop of Aouste his intimate friend, and who was acquainted with my family. As he was not ignorant of the persecution of the Bishop of Geneva, who pursued us with the utmost rigour, all around the court of Turin, he made me an offer to go into his diocese, and sent me by Father la Combe some very obliging let-

ters. He had a high esteem for Father la Combe: He was willing even to give up his own bishoprick in favour of him, as he was far advanced in age.

The Marchioness of Prunai, who had been so warmly desirous of my company, seeing my great crosses and reproaches, looked coldly upon me. My child-like simplicity, which was the state wherein at that time God kept me, passed with her for stupidity, though in that condition he inspired me to utter oracles; for when the question was to help any one, or about any thing which God required of me, he gave me, with the weakness of a child, which appeared in pure candour, the evident tokens of divine strength. Her heart was quite shut up to me all the time I was there. Our Lord however made me foretell all that should fall out, and which since that time has actually been fulfilled, as well to herself, as to her daughter, and to the virtuous Ecclesiastic who lived at her house. She did not fail, at last, to conceive more friendship for me, seeing then that Christ was in me. It was the force of self-love, and fear of reproach, which had closed up her heart. Moreover she thought her state more advanced than in reality it was, by reason of her being without probations; but she soon saw by experience that I had told her the truth. She was obliged for family reasons to leave Turin, and go to live on her own estate. She solicited me to go with her; but the education of my daughter did not permit my compliance. To stay at Turin without her seemed improper, because, having lived very retired in this place, I had made no acquaintance in it. I knew not which way to turn. The Bishop of Verceil, where Father la Combe was, most oblig-

ingly wrote to me, earnestly entreating me to come thither, promising his protection, and assuring me of his esteem, adding, "that he should look upon me as his own sister; that he wished extremely to have me there." It was his own sister, a *religious* of the visitation of Turin, one of my particular friends, who had written to him about me, as had also a French gentleman, an acquaintance of his. But a point of honour kept me from it. I would not have it said that I had gone after Father la Combe, and that I had come to Turin, only for the purpose of going to Verceil. He had also his reputation to preserve, which was the cause that he could not agree to my going thither, however importunate the Bishop was for it. Had we believed it to be the will of God, we should both of us have passed over these considerations. God kept us both in so great a dependence on his orders, that he did not let us foreknow them; but the *divine moment* of his Providence determined every thing. This proved of very great service to Father la Combe, who had long walked in assurances, to die to them and to himself; for God by an effect of his goodness, that he might thus die without any reserve, took them all away from him.

During the whole time of my residence at Turin, our Lord conferred on me very great favours. I found myself every day more transformed into him, and had continually more knowledge of the state of souls, without ever being mistaken or deceived therein, though some were willing to persuade me to think the contrary. I had used my utmost endeavours to give myself other thoughts, which has cost me not a little. For when I told, or wrote to, Father la

Combe about the state of some souls, which appeared to him more perfect and advanced than the knowledge given me of them, he attributed it to pride; he was very angry with me, and prejudiced against my state. I had no uneasiness on account of his esteeming me the less, for I was not in a condition to reflect whether he esteemed me or not. He could not reconcile (God so permitting it, to take from him every support) an obedience to a miracle in most things, with so extraordinary a firmness, which in certain cases he looked on as criminal. He admitted a distrust of my grace; for he was not yet sufficiently confirmed in his way, nor did he duly comprehend that it did not in any wise depend on me, to be either one way or another; and that if I had any such power, I should have suited myself to what he said, to spare myself the crosses which that caused me; or at least would have artfully dissembled my real sentiments. But I could do neither. Were all to perish by it, I was in such a manner constrained, that I could not forbear telling him the things, just as our Lord directed me to tell them to him. In this he has given me an inviolable fidelity to the very last. No crosses or pains have ever made me fail a moment therein. These things then, which appeared to him to be the strong prejudice of a conceited opinion, set him at variance against me. And though he did not openly shew it, but on the contrary tried to conceal it from me, yet how far distant soever he were from me, I could not be ignorant of it; my spirit felt it, and that more or less, as the opposition was stronger or weaker; and as soon as it abated or ended, my pain occasioned thereby, ceased. He also on his side ex-

perienced the like. He has told me and wrote to me many times over, "When I stand well with God, I find I am well with you: when I am otherwise with him, I then find myself to be so with you too." Thus he saw clearly that when God received him into his bosom, it was always in uniting him to me, as if he would accept of nothing from him but in this union.

While he was at Turin, a widow who was a good servant of God, all in the brightness of sensibility, came to him to confess. She uttered wonderful things of her state. I was then at the other side of the confessional. He told me, "he had met with a soul given up to God, that it was she who was present, that he was very much edified by her; that he was far from finding the like in me; that I operated nothing but death upon his soul." At first I rejoiced at his having met with such a holy soul, as it ever gives me the highest joy to see my God glorified. As I was returning, the Lord shewed me clearly the state of that soul, as only a beginning of devotion mixt with affection and a little silence, filled with a new sensation. This and more, as it was set before me, I was obliged to write to him upon it. On his first reading of my letter he discovered the stamp of truth in it; but soon after, letting in again his old reflections, he viewed all I wrote in the light of pride; for he still had in his mind the ordinary rules of humility conceived and comprised after our manner. As to me, I let myself be led as a child, who says and does, without distinction, whatever it is made to say and do. I left myself to be led wheresoever my heavenly Father pleased, high or low; all was alike good to me.

He wrote to me that, at his first reading of my let-

ter, there appeared in it something of truth, but that on reading it over again, he found it to be full of pride, and of a preference of my own discernment to that of others. Sometime after he was more enlightened hereupon, and in regard to the state I was in. He then said to me, "Continue to believe as you have done; I encourage and exhort you to do it." Upon which I began to respire, to recover new life and an enlargement of soul. "Let nobody (*said I to myself, as I was returning*) speak to me any more of humility. The ideas which people generally have of virtues are not for me. There is nothing else for me but that one thing, viz. ever singly to obey my God." Some time after, he sufficiently discovered, by that person's manner of acting, that she was very far from what he had thought of her. I give this only as one instance. I might give many others nearly like it; but this is sufficient.

CHAPTER XVI.

One night in a dream our Lord shewed me, that he would also purify the maid whom he had given me, and make her truly enter into death to herself. I then freely resolved to suffer for her, as I did for Father la Combe. As she resisted God much more than he, and was much more under the power of *self-love*, she had more to be purified from. For this maid I have borne much, during three whole years. Our Lord caused me incessantly to do miracles on her account. It seemed as if he gave me an absolute power over both her body and soul. How much so-

ever she were indisposed, as soon as I said to her, "Be healed," she was so: and for her pain, I bore the most of it. It seems as if our Lord had given me some share of experience of what himself had suffered for men. He shewed me, in a dream, her resistances, under the figure of sundry animals, coming out of her body, whose outsides appeared pure, bright and transparent as glass, but all unclean within. Hereby I knew that she had passed through the first purification, or cleansing of the outside, for which reason she had passed in the world for a saint, but far from being inwardly purified. While on that account I suffered, I saw those animals destroy one another, till there remained only one, which devoured all the rest; yet itself appeared to have all the iniquity of the others in it. What I could not tolerate in her was her regard for *herself*. I saw clearly that the devil cannot hurt us, but so far as we retain some fondness for this corrupt *self*. This sight was from God, who gave me the discerning of spirits, which would ever accept or reject what was from him, or was not; and that not from any common methods of judging, not from any information, but by an inward principle which is his gift.

That this point be not mistaken, it is needful to mention here that souls which are yet *in themselves*, whatever degree of light and power they have attained, are unqualified for it. They often think they have this discernment, and it is nothing else than an antipathy of nature. Our Lord had destroyed in me every sort of natural antipathy. The soul must be very pure, and depending on God only, that in him all these things may be discerned. In proportion

as this maid became inwardly purified my pain abated, till the Lord let me know that her state was going to be changed, which soon happily ensued. In comparison of inward pains for souls, outward persecutions, though ever so violent, scarce gave me any.

The Bishop of Geneva wrote to different kinds of persons: he wrote in my favour to such as he thought would shew me his letters, and quite the contrary in the letters which he thought I should never see. It was so ordered that these persons, having shewed each other their letters received from him, were struck with indignation to see in him so shameful a duplicity. They sent me those letters that I might take proper precautions. I kept them two years, and then burnt them, not to hurt that prelate by them. The strongest battery he raised against me was what he did with the secretary of state, who held that post in conjunction with the Marchioness of Prunai's brother. He used all imaginable endeavours to render me odious, and to cry me down. He employed certain Abbots for that purpose, insomuch that, though I appeared very little abroad, I was well known by the descriptions this Bishop had given of me. This did not make so much impression as it would have done, if he had appeared in a better light at court: some letters of his, which her royal highness found, after the Prince's death, which he had written to him against her, had that effect on the Princess, that, (instead of taking any notice of what he now wrote against me) she shewed me great respect, and sent her request to me to come to see her. Accordingly I waited on her. She assured me of her protection, and that she was glad of my being in her dominions.

Our Lord discovered to me in a dream, that he called me, in order that I should *help my neighbour*. Of all the mysterious dreams I have had, there never was any which made more impression on me than this, and whose unction of grace continued longer. It seemed to me that, being with one of my inmates, we went up a steep mountain, at the foot of which was a stormy sea, full of dangerous shoals, which one must have crossed before coming to this mountain, which was all covered with cypresses. When we had got up to the top of it, we there found another mountain inclosed with fragrant hedges all round, having a gate for entrance which was locked. We knocked at it, but my companion descended back again, or stayed at the gate; for she entered not with me. The master came and opened the gate to me, and then locked it again. Taking me by the hand, he led me into the wood, which was of cedars. This mountain was called Lebanon. In this wood there was a lodge, and in it two beds. Hither he brought me. I asked him, for whom "are these two beds?" He answered me, "One for my mother, and the other for thee, my spouse." In this chamber were animals naturally wild, and enemies to one another, all changed in their natures, all living together in a delightful and admirable concord, all respectfully and joyfully saluting me. I remembered hereupon the prophecy of Isaiah, xi. 6. and the chamber mentioned in the Canticles, iii. 4. This place breathed nothing but candour and innocence. I perceived in it a boy of about twelve years of age. The Spouse bade him go to see if there were any that had escaped from the shipwreck. His service was only to go to the foot of the mountain, to see if he could spy any

one. The Spouse turning to me said, "I have chosen thee, my spouse, to bring hither with thee all the persons who shall have courage and resolution enough to embark on this frightful sea, and to suffer shipwreck there." The boy returned, and told him, "that he did not yet see any one escaped from the shipwreck." Thereupon I awaked, much affected with this dream. The sweet impression it left on my spirit continued several days.

My interior state grew still more firm, and my heart so pure that not any imagination entered it, but such as it pleased the Lord to put in it. Mine was such a state as is beyond all the power of expression to describe, every motion of the creature so entirely lost, that though outwardly it be free, inwardly it is not, even for the least thing in the world; all its movements and actions being now in God, and under the dominion of his will, in entire union with him, the soul living in and of God, as the body lives in and of the air it breathes. This state is known of God only. Such souls are, as to their exterior, only common, though precious in the sight of God. Though they are the objects of his delight, they are often the butt of the rage and scorn of the creatures.

CHAP. XVII.

BEING still in Savoy, it pleased God to make use of me to draw to his love a religious man of merit, yet one who had little thought about advancing towards perfection. He had sometimes accompanied Father la Combe, when he visited me in my illness; and it was put into my heart to pray to our Lord for him. That very evening, when I received the ex-

treme Unction, he approached to my bedside, and I said to him, "that if our Lord granted me mercy after my death, he should become sensible of the effects of it." With these words he felt himself inwardly touched, so much as to shed tears. He was one of those who had most opposed Father la Combe, and the very person who had uttered the most of lying stories about me, without knowing me. He returned quite changed, and could not forbear desiring to see me again, and being very much affected, as he thought I was going to die. He wept so much, that the other *Religious* rallied him upon it. They said to him, "Can there be greater folly? Behold a Lady of whom you spoke a great deal of ill only two days ago; now she is dying, you weep for her as if she were your mother;" yet nothing could abate his tears, or his desire of coming to speak to me again. Our Lord answered his desire, and I grew better. I had time to speak to him: he gave himself up to God after a wonderful manner, though he was already advanced in age. His very nature was changed. From craft and duplicity he became simple as a child. He could not call me any thing but his mother. He also conceived a confidence for Father la Combe, and made a general confession to him.

Thus he has continued several years. One day he was testifying more than ordinary friendship for me, having come a long way on purpose to see me, and to speak to me. He had had a fall from his horse. From thence he had a very painful and dangerous swelling. I said to him that he should be no more incommoded with it. He believed and was entirely cured, never having felt it since. From hence his confidence rose to such a height, that he said to me, "Though all

the world should renounce you, I never will." This expression struck me, and I replied, my father, you will both renounce me and let go your hold of what now possesses your mind." He was troubled at my saying thus, and warmly began again, protesting he never would; adding, "that he was not a child, and that there was not any man more firm and constant than he." The more he thus protested, the more I had an inward certainty that he would do both. I said to him, "My father; in the name of God I beseech you to sacrifice *yourself* to him, though it were to renounce me, and even to be against me, if he so permits it." He could not bear to admit a thought of the kind, and expressed a very great grief, because, *as he said*, I distrusted him. Six months after, he came again to see me, more affectionate than ever before, saying, "See how you are a false prophetess, and how far I remain from renouncing you."

A year after, as I was with Father la Combe, I said to him concerning this person, "He is certainly changed, for the Lord gives me a sense of it." When the Lord in a particular manner gives me any one, I am always obliged to feel a pain for the slips and falls of such. I may truely say, I have brought forth children not without many pains. When they became unfaithful, they were taken from me, and seemed to be no more any thing to me: but as for those who were not taken from me, who were wavering or unfaithful for a time, for them he caused me to suffer. For their infidelities I felt a pain, yet I knew that they would one day return. When I told Father la Combe what I inwardly felt of the alteration in the aforesaid person, he replied, "It was nothing else but my imagination." A few days after he received a

letter from him, full of expressions of respect and friendship. He shewed me it, and said, "See how he is changed!" As I was reading over this letter I had again a very great certainty that he was changed, and that some remains of respect and shame made him continue to write thus, and that he would do the same for some time yet. Just so it fell out. He did for some time continue to write forced letters; then he left off writing, and Father la Combe learned that the fear of losing certain friends had changed him. There are some for whom our Lord induces me to pray, and causes me to take some steps to help them, and others for whom it is not given me so much as to write one letter, or say a word to attempt their restoration.

There was a certain man who was one of the most violent that could be, who kept no measures, and who seemed to retain more of his *soldierly* than of his *religious* profession. As Father la Combe was his superior, and tried to win him both by his words and by his example, the other could not bear him, but broke out into violent passions against him. When he said mass in the place I was in, I, without any information, felt that he was not in a good state. One day that I saw him pass with the chalice in his hand to go to say mass, I was seized with a very great tenderness for him, and as it were an assurance that he was under a change. I even knew that he was a vessel of election, which God had chosen for himself after a particular manner. I was obliged to write so to Father la Combe, who wrote back to me, "that it was one of the falsest ideas that he had ever perceived in me; and that he had scarce ever met with a man worse disposed; and consequently that it was

one of the most ridiculous reveries that ever was uttered." But how was he surprised when, about four or five o'clock in the evening, he saw him come into his chamber, from one of the proudest of men become one of the humblest! He began with asking his forgiveness for all the past trouble he had given him, and said to him with the tears running down his cheeks, "My father, there is wrought in me such an overturning as is beyond comprehension." He told him how he had seen (in a dream) the holy Virgin, who had shewed him that he was in a state of damnation, but that she had prayed for him. Father la Combe immediately wrote to me that what I had imparted to him of such a person, he now found to be very true, and that he was on account of it filled with great joy. All that night I was so penetrated with the precious unction of the designs of God on that soul, that I slept not a moment. Some days after, the Lord renewed to me the knowledge of the same thing with so much unction, and so filled me with the view of it, that I slept no more all that night. I wrote to him of the designs of God in his favour, and sent the letter open to Father la Combe to deliver to him, who hesitated for some time, thinking it scarce safe to confide in him so soon; but as he passed by him, just at the same time, he could not then omit giving it to him. He was very much affected with it, and resolved to give himself up entirely to God.

He finds it hard work to break all his fetters, and seems still to be divided betwixt God and some attachments, which to him appear innocent ones; though God gives him many strokes, to break him off from them entirely; and his first reluctances do not make me lose my hope of what he will one day arise to.

Before his change I saw (in a dream) a great number of very beautiful birds, which every one was pursuing with great emulation and eagerness to catch them. I beheld them all without taking any part therein, and without wishing to catch any of them. I was surprised not a little, to see that they all came to offer themselves to me, without my using any effort to have them. Among them there was one of an extraordinary beauty, which far surpassed all the others. Every body was eager to get this: but it escaped them all, and me too as well as the rest; but afterwards it returned to offer itself to me, when I no more expected it. There was one of the others which, after having come in the like manner, fluttered for a long time, one while offering itself, another while retiring, but at length offered itself in good earnest. This last appeared to me to represent the religious man I have been just speaking of. Others fled quite away. But the beautiful bird, which had not any rival, is not unknown to me, though he has not come yet. Be it either before or after my death, I am assured the time will come when he will wholly give himself up to God.

As I was with the Marchioness of Prunai, undetermined whether I should place my daughter at the Visitation of Turin, to go thither with her, or take some other course; I was exceedingly surprised, at a time I least expected it, to see Father la Combe arrive from Verceil, and tell me, "I must return to Paris without any delay." It was in the evening, and he said, "I must set off next morning." I confess this sudden news startled me. It was for me a double sacrifice to return to a place where I knew they had so much cried me down; towards a family which had

nothing but contempt for me, and which had represented my journey (caused by pure necessity) as a voluntary course, pursued through a human attachment for Father la Combe, than which nothing could be more false. God only knows how entirely clear we were both of us from such sentiments, how equally ready we were to see each other no more in his will, or to see each other continually in the same will. Behold me then disposed to go off, without offering a single word in reply, with my daughter and my chambermaid, without any body to guide and attend us; for Father la Combe was resolved not to accompany me, not so much as in passing the mountains; because the Bishop of Geneva had written on all sides that I was gone to Turin, to run after him: but the father-provincial, who was a man of quality, and well-acquainted with the virtue of Father la Combe, told him, "that it was improper and unsafe to let me venture on those mountains, without some person of my acquaintance; and the more as I had my little daughter with me. And that he therefore ordered him to accompany me." Father la Combe, confessed to me that he had some reluctance to do it, and that only obedience, and the danger to which I should have been exposed, made him surmount it. He was to accompany me only to Grenoble, and from thence to return to Turin. I went off then, designing for Paris, there to suffer whatever crosses and trials it should please God to inflict.

What made me pass by Grenoble was the desire I had to spend two or three days with a lady, an eminent servant of God, and one of my friends. When I was there, Father la Combe and that lady spoke to me not to go any farther; that God would glorify

himself in me and by me in that place. He returned to Verceil, and I left myself to be conducted as a child by Providence. This lady took me to the house of a good widow, there not being accommodations at the inn; and as I was ordered to stop at Grenoble, at her house I resided. I placed my daughter in a convent, and resolved to employ all this time in resigning myself to be possessed in solitude by Him who is the absolute Sovereign of my soul. I made not any visit in this place; no more had I in any of the others where I had sojourned. But I was greatly surprised when, a few days after my arrival, there came to see me several persons who made profession of a singular devotion to God. I perceived immediately a gift which he had given me, both of discerning spirits and of administering to each that which suited their states. I felt myself invested, all of a sudden, with the apostolic state, and discerned the conditions of the souls of such persons as spoke to me, and that with so much facility, that they were surprised at it, and said one to another, "that I gave every one of them the very thing they had stood in need of." It was thou O God, who didst all these things. Some of them sent others to me. It came to such an excess, that, generally from six in the morning till eight in the evening, I was taken up in speaking of God. People flocked on all sides, far and near, friars, priests, men of the world, maids, wives, widows, all came one after another; and God supplied me with what was pertinent and satisfactory to them all, after a wonderful manner, without any share of my study or meditation therein. Nothing was hid from me of their interior state, and of what passed within them. Here, oh my God, thou made an infinite number of con-

quests known to thyself only. They were instantly furnished with a wonderful facility of prayer. God conferred on them his grace plentifully, and wrought marvellous changes in them. The most advanced of these souls found, when with me, in silence, a grace communicated to them which they could neither comprehend, nor cease to admire. The others found an unction in my words, and that they operated in them what I said to them. They said, "they had never experienced any thing like it." Friars of different orders, and priests of merit, came to see me, to whom our Lord granted very great favours, as indeed he did to all, without exception, who came in sincerity.

One thing was surprising, and that was, that I had not a word to say to such as came only to watch my words, and to criticise on them. Even when I thought to try to speak to them, I felt that I could not, and that God would not have made me do it. Some of them in return said, "The people are fools to go to see that lady. She cannot speak." Others of them treated me as if I were only a stupid simpleton. After they left me, there came one and said, "I could not get hither soon enough to apprise you not to speak to those persons; they come from such and such to try what they can catch from you to your disadvantage." I answered them, "Our Lord has prevented your charity; for I was not able to say one word to them."

I felt that what I spoke flowed from the fountain, and that I was only the instrument of him who made me speak. Amidst this general applause, our Lord made me comprehend what the apostolic state was, with which he had honoured me; that to give one's

self up to the help of souls, in the purity of his Spirit, was to expose one's self to the most cruel persecutions. These very words were imprinted on my heart, "To resign ourselves to serve our neighbour is to sacrifice ourselves to a gibbet. Such as now proclaim, *Blessed is he who cometh in the name of the Lord*, will soon cry out, *Take away, crucify*." One of my friends speaking of the general esteem the people had for me, I said to her, "Observe what I now tell you, that you will hear curses out of the same mouths which at present pronounce blessings." Our Lord made me comprehend that I must be conformable to him in all his states; and that, if he had still continued in a private life with his parents, he never had been crucified; that, when he would resign any of his servants to crucifixion, he employed such in the ministry and service of their neighbours. It is certain that all the souls herein employed of God by apostolic destination, and who are truly in the apostolic state, are to suffer extremely. I speak not of those who put themselves into it, who, not being called of God in a singular manner, and having nothing of the grace of the apostleship, have none of its crosses; but of those only who surrender themselves to God without any reserve, and who are willing with their whole hearts to be exposed, for his sake, to sufferings without any mitigation. They must assuredly become *a spectacle to God, to angels and to men; to God*, of glory, by their conformity to Jesus Christ; *to angels*, of joy; and *to men*, of cruelty and ignominy.

CHAP. XVIII.

AMONG so great a number of good souls, on whom our Lord wrought much by me, some were given me only as plants to cultivate. I knew their state, but had not that near connection with, or authority over them, which I had over some. It was then that I comprehended the true maternity beyond what I had done before; for those of the latter kind were given me as children, of whom some were faithful. I knew they would be so; and they were closely united to me in pure charity. Others were unfaithful; I knew that of these last some would never return from their infidelity, and they were taken from me; some, after slipping aside, were recovered. Both of them cost me violent pains of heart, when, for want of courage to die to themselves, they gave up the point; and revolted from the good beginning they had been favoured with.

Our Lord, amongst such multitudes as followed him on earth, had so few true children. Wherefore he said to his Father, "Those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost but the son of perdition." Shewing hereby that he lost not any beside of his apostles, or disciples, though they sometimes made false steps.

Among the different numbers of friars who came to see me, there was one order which discovered the good effects of grace more than any other. Some of that very order had before this, in a little town where Father la Combe was in the exercise of his mission, been actuated with a false zeal, and violent in perse-

cuting all the good souls which had sincerely dedicated themselves to God, plaguing them after such a manner as can scarce be conceived, burning all their books which treated of silence and inward prayer, refusing absolution to such as were in the practice of it, driving into consternation, and almost into despair, such as had formerly led wicked lives, but were now reformed, and preserved in grace by means of prayer, becoming spotless and blameless in their conduct. These friars had proceeded to such an excess of wild zeal, as to raise a sedition in that town, in which a father of the oratory, a person of distinction and merit, received strokes with a stick in the open street, because he prayed in the evenings, and on Sundays made a short fervent prayer, which insensibly habituated these good souls to the use and practice of the like.

I never in all my life had so much consolation as to see in this little town, so many pious souls, who with a heavenly emulation gave up their whole hearts to God. There were girls of twelve or thirteen years of age, who industriously followed their work almost all the day long, in silence, and therein enjoyed a communion with God, having acquired a fixed habit therein. As these girls were poor, they placed themselves two and two together, and such as could do it read to the others who could not. One saw there the innocence of the primitive christians revived. There was in that town a poor laundress who had five children, and a husband paralytic, lame in the right arm, yet worse distempered in mind than in body. He had little strength left for any thing else than to beat her: yet this poor woman bore it with all the meekness and patience of an angel, while she by her labour supported him and his five children. She

had a wonderful gift of prayer, and preserved the presence of God, with a tranquility of mind, amidst her great sufferings and extreme poverty. There was also a woman who kept a shop, and another who made locks, very much affected with God. These were close friends. Sometimes the one, and sometimes the other read to this laundress; and they were surprised to find that she was instructed by the Lord himself in all they read to her, and spoke divinely of it.

Those friars sent for this woman, and threatened her much if she did not leave off prayer, telling her it was only for churchmen to pray, and that she was very bold to practise it. She replied, (or rather he who instructed her, for she was very ignorant of herself) "that Christ had commanded all to pray, and that he had said, *What I say unto you I say unto all.* Mark xiii. 33. 37. without specifying either priests or friars; that without prayer she could not support her crosses and poverty; that formerly she had lived without it, and then was very wicked; that since she had been in the exercise of it, she had loved God with all her soul; so that to leave off prayer was to renounce her salvation, which she could not do." She added, "that they might take twenty persons who had never practised prayer, and twenty of those who are in the practice of it: then, *said she*, inform yourselves of the lives of both sorts, and ye will see if ye have any reason to cry out against prayer." Such words as these, from such a woman, one would think might have fully convinced them; but (instead of that) they only irritated them the more. They assured her "she should have no absolution till she promised them to desist from prayer." She said,

"It depended not on her, and that Christ is master of what he communicates to his creature, and of doing with it what he pleases." They refused her absolution; and after railing at a good taylor, who served God with his whole heart, they ordered all the books without exception, which treated on prayer, to be brought to them, and burnt them with their own hands in the public square. They were highly elated with their performance; but all the town presently arose in an uproar, on account of the late insolent and intolerable usage given to the father of the oratory. The principal men went to the Bishop of Geneva, and complained to him of the scandals of these new missionaries, so different from the others. Speaking of Father la Combe who had been there before them on his mission, they said "these seemed as if they were sent to destroy all the good he had done." The Bishop was forced to come himself to that town, and there to mount the pulpit, protesting he had no share in it, and that these fathers had pushed their zeal too far. The friars on the other side declared, *they had done all they did pursuant to the orders given them.*

There were also at Tonon young women who had retired together, being poor villagers, the better to earn their livelihood and to serve God. One of them read from time to time, while the others were at work, and not one went out without asking leave of the eldest. They made ribbonds, or spun, every one earning their bread by their labour, and the strong supporting the weak. They went to separate those poor girls, and others beside them, in several villages, and drove them out of the church.

It was then the friars of this very order whom our Lord made use of to establish prayer in I know not

how many places. And, into the places where they went, they carried a hundred times more books of prayer than those which their brethren had burned. The hand of God appeared to me wonderfully in these things. I had then occasion to know these friars in the way I am going to tell.

One day that I was sick, a brother, who has skill in diseases, and is useful therein, being come for a charitable collection, and hearing I was ill, came in to me, and gave me medicines proper for my disorder. We entered into a conversation which revived in him the love he had for God, which he acknowledged had been too much stifled by his great occupations. I made him comprehend that there was not any occupation which should hinder him from loving God, and from being occupied within himself. He readily believed me, as he already had a good share of piety, and of a disposition to inwardness. Our Lord conferred on him many favours, and gave him to be one of my true children. What is wonderful is, that all those whom he has given me are brought forth by me on the cross, in which sense he causes me *to fill up that which is behind of his passion.* (Col. i. 24.) Oh goodness of God thus to associate poor creatures to his great mysteries!

When our Lord gives me children after this manner, he gives them a very particular affection for me. They cannot forbear calling me their mother; which has been the case of many, and some of great note. Several whom I did not know but by their letters, have seen me in dreams resolving all their difficulties. I have found that when our Lord honours a *soul* with spiritual fruitfulness, he gives *it* what is necessary to nourish and support its children, according to their

different degrees. I was sometimes so filled with these divine communications that I have been ready to cry out, "Oh my Lord, give me hearts to discharge myself of my fulness" When some of my children came to me, or new ones were given me, in whom grace was already strong, I was relieved and comforted; they also felt an inconceivable plenitude of grace, and a greater gift of prayer, each according to their degree; which surprised them greatly at the first, and made them, when necessity separated me from them, feel a very great want of me. But afterwards they experimentally comprehended this mystery; and when necessity separated me from them, or I did not know them, having never seen them, instructions and consolations were communicated to them when afar off.

CHAPTER XIX.

There were there some good young women, who were particularly given me; and especially one who had felt a very great attraction to come to me: and our Lord gave her by me all she had need of; but when at a distance from me, she was strongly tempted, and then afraid to return to me; yet when she took courage and came, her pains and fears were all dissipated, and she experienced, while she was with me, that fulness of grace which is come by Jesus Christ: yet after this she was tempted so far as to imagine me to be a sorceress; and that it was thereby, that I had driven away from her the evil spirit which had assaulted her, and that I had foretold her what would befal her, which actually did befal her accord-

ingly. Under such an impression on her mind she came to me, but opened not her lips. I knew her uneasiness, told her of it, and she confessed it. When we were at church, I said to her, "If it is an evil spirit which causes me to act towards you, let him continue to torment you; if it be a good spirit I pray that during the service you may partake of that spirit." At the very beginning of the service her soul overflowed with a peace of paradise, and was in so great an union with God, that she scarce knew whether she was on earth or in heaven. After that manner was our communion, and then she said in herself; "Oh, how certain I am now that it is God who moves and guides her!" After mass was over, she said to me, "Oh my mother, how fully sensible have I been that God is all in all in you! I have been in Paradise."

When at any time after this she committed faults, and concealed them from me, or covered them with disguises, I felt it at first; and that our Lord, who loves and accepts of nothing but pure sincerity, rejected her therein.

I experienced that this young woman stuck to me still by a certain secret tie, as a sinner does to his God, from whence he may still be received in him, when the cause of the rejection ceases. God incessantly solicits the *will* to cease to be rebellious, and spares nothing on his side for this good end. The *will* is free; yet grace follows it still. As soon as the *will* ceases to rebel, it finds grace at its door, ready to introduce its unspeakable benefits. Oh the goodness of God and baseness of the sinner, each of them amazing when clearly seen! I felt, I say, how this young woman and many other souls stuck to mine by a tie of filiation; but I found I could no more communi-

cate grace to her as I had done, by reason of her want of simplicy in the *will*, and that it was impossible for the divine efflux to enter, till her dissimulation were destroyed, though I loved her much; but that *will* in her occasioned the rejection, which could not end but by its change. How wonderful is God to give to poor creatures the experimental knowledge of his deep and mysterious secrets! For what I have experienced in regard to her I have done in regard to sundry others. But I have given her case as one example. Father la Combe thought her virtuous: when I told him a little of this fault of her's, he accused me of rash judgment, which indeed was far from me; but he afterwards came to see for himself enough of her craft and artifice.

Before I arrived at Grenoble, the lady, my friend there, saw in a dream that our Lord gave me an infinite number of children all uniformly clad, bearing on their habits the marks of candour and innocence. She thought I was coming to take care of the children of the hospital. But as soon as she told me it, I discerned that it was not that which the dream meant; but that our Lord would give me, by a spiritual fruitfulness, a great number of children; that they would not be my true children but in simplicity, candour and innocence. So great an aversion I have to artifice and disguise.

CHAP. XX.

THE good brother I have spoken of (Chap. xviii.) found himself disposed to lay open his heart to me like a child. Our Lord gave him through me

all that was nacessary for him; for though disposed to the spiritual life, yet for want of courage and fidelity he had not duely advanced in it. Hereupon he said to me, "You are my true mother." From that time God has granted him many favours through this poor nothing creature. I felt he was one of my sons, one of the most faithful and closely united. Every time he came to see me, he became more encouraged and fortified to die thoroughly to himself, sensibly assured of the power of God in me, which he felt, in his dependent state. Our Lord instructed him in silence, and prepared him to receive his grace, without the mediation of words, which carried on its operations in him, in proportion as he died more to himself. Christ has declared, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." With the greatest certainty, through his blessed operations, is this experienced. As this brother was already advanced in the spiritual life, and had only stopped and been retarded in it, he was hereby soon recovered.

In proportion as his soul advanced sufficiently for continuing in silence before God, and as the Word operated on him in silence, being vivid and fruitful, and not a state of indolence, as some ignorantly imagine, he thereby grew in grace. Oh, immediate ineffable Word! who tellest us every thing without articulating any thing! He who has never experienced thee knows nothing, though he thinks himself ever so knowing. It was then given to him to communicate with me in silence the operations of that divine Word, the fulness whereof in him became more abundant, like a sluice lifted up, which discharges itself with profusion, and that with so much

force and grace in souls well-disposed, that the full river does not flow with more impetuosity. But alas! how few souls are pure enough for this enjoyment passing in them after such a manner! This fulness which he received still emptied him more of himself, putting him in a condition of greater silence before God, and a greater detachment from every thing else. It still disposed him more both for God and for me.

Oh my God, how well I comprehended in this silence that in souls which are wholly thine thy grace flows like a river! This is that *well of water springing up into everlasting life*; the great mystery which Christ spoke of, and opened to the Samaritan woman. It springs up in such abundance that there is a sufficiency in it for filling an infinite number of souls, each according to its degree, without ceasing to be full. Oh admirable hierarchy, which begins in this life, to continue through all eternity! Yes, there is a hierarchy among saints on earth, as among angels in heaven. And those who have served as channels, in their fulness, to water other souls, shall serve as such in eternity. The water of life will flow from the sacred source into the souls of all those who have lived by grace, more or less, as they are fitted, extended or dilated to receive of its abundance. And it requires more of largeness and extent both to receive and to communicate abundantly to others. Those who are dead in sin receive nothing of this plenitude of life. Through the want of this they may properly be said to be dead; all the passages, by which life might flow into them, being closed up by the dominion of sin. But souls living in the pure love of God all receive from this fulness more or less,

according as they are disposed or fitted for it by the purity or receptivity of the soul. But not all, who are come so far as to receive the grace, are from thence in a condition to communicate it. They have a great way to advance before they become fitted for that.

This good brother had occasion to bring to me some of his companions; and God took hold of them all. It was at the very time that God gave me these good *Religious*, that the others of the same order were making all the ravages I have mentioned, and opposing with all their might the holy spirit of God. I could not but admire to see how God was pleased to make himself amends for former damages, by the pouring out of his spirit in abundance on these good friars, while the others were labouring vehemently against it, doing all they could to destroy its dominion and efficacy in their fellow mortals. But their labours of this kind had no great effect; those good souls, instead of being staggered by persecution, grew stronger by it. The Superior, and the master of the novices of the house in which this good brother was, declared against me, without knowing me; and were grievously chagrined that a *Woman*, as they said, should be so much flocked around, and so much sought after: for looking at the things as they were in themselves, and not as they were in God, who does whatever pleases him, they had nothing but contempt for the gift which was lodged in so mean an instrument, instead of only esteeming God and his grace, without looking at the meanness of the subject in which he sheds it. Yet this good brother brought it about that his Superior came at last to see me, and to thank me for the charities which he said I had

done them: our Lord so ordered, that he found something in my conversation which reached and took hold of him. At length he was compleatly gained and brought over. And he it was, who some time after, being visitor, dispersed such a number of those books, bought at their own charge, which the others had tried utterly to destroy, causing them to be burned. Oh how wonderful art thou, oh God! In all thy ways how wise, in all thy conduct how full of love! How well thou knowest the way to frustrate all the false wisdom of men, and to triumph over all their precautions!

There were in this noviciate many novices. The eldest of them grew so uneasy under his vocation, that he knew not what to do. So great was his trouble that he could neither read, study, pray, nor do scarce any of his duties. The Collector, his companion, was moved to bring him to me. We spoke a while together, and the Lord discovered to me both the cause of his disorder and its remedy. I told him it; and he began to practise prayer, even that of the heart. He was of a sudden wonderfully changed, and the Lord highly favoured him. As I spoke to him grace wrought in his heart, and his soul drank it in, as the parched ground does the gentle rain. He felt himself quit of his pain before he left the room. He then readily, with joy and even with perfection, performed all his exercises, which before he did with reluctance and disgust. He now both studied and prayed easily, and discharged all his duties, in such a manner, that he was scarce known to himself or others. What astonished him most was a sprout of life which remained with him, and a gift of prayer. He saw that there was readily given him what he could never

have before, whatever pains he took for it: and this enlivening sprout was the principle which made him act, gave him grace for his employments, and an inward fruition of the presence of God, which brought all good with it. He gradually brought me all the novices, all of whom partook of the effects of grace, though differently, according to their different degrees. Never was there a more flourishing noviciate.

The master and the Superior could not forbear admiring so great a change in their novices, though they penetrated not the cause of it. One day, as they were speaking of it to the Collector, for they esteemed him highly on account of his merit and virtue, and telling him, they were surprised at the change in the novices, and the blessing the Lord had bestowed on the noviciate, he said to them, "My fathers, if you will permit me, I will tell you the reason of it. It is the lady against whom ye have exclaimed so much, without knowing her, whom God has made use of for all this." They were very much surprised; and both the master, though advanced in age, and his Superior then submitted humbly to practise prayer, after the manner taught by a little book, which the Lord inspired me to write, and of which I shall say more hereafter: and such benefit they reaped from it, that the Superior said to me, "I am become quite a new man. I could before no longer practise prayer, because my reasoning faculty was grown dull and exhausted; but now I do it as often as I will, with ease, with much fruit, and a quite different sense of the presence of God:" and the master said, "These forty years have I been a *Religious*, or friar, and can say that I never knew how to pray, nor have I ever known and tasted of God, as I have done since I read that little book."

Many others were gained to God, besides those whom I looked on as my true children, and who cost me the pangs of their birth. For the others I felt not that maternity, and that intimate efflux of grace I have spoken of, though they were won to the Lord of my means. He gave me a very great number of children, and three famous friars, of an order by which I have been, and still am, very much persecuted. He made me also of service to a great number of Nuns, of virtuous young women, and even men of the world; among the rest a young man of quality, who had quitted the order of the knights of Malta, to take that of the priesthood. He was the relation of a bishop near him, who had had designs of preferment for him: he has been much favoured of the Lord, and is constant in prayer. I could not describe the great number of souls which were then given me, as well maids as wives, priests and friars. But there were three curates, one canon, and one grand-vicar, who were more particularly given me. There was one priest very intimately given me, for whom I suffered much, through his not being willing to die to himself, and loving himself too much; with a sad regret I saw him decaying, falling away till he was quite snatched from me. As for the others, there are some of them who have continued stedfast and immovable, some whom the tempest has shaken a little, but not torn away. Though these start aside yet they still return. But those who are snatched away return no more.

There was one true daughter given me, whom our Lord made use of to gain many others to him. She was in a strange state of death when I first saw her, and by me he gave her life and peace. She afterwards fell extremely ill. The doctors said she would

die; but I had an assurance to the contrary, and that God would make use of her (as he has done) to gain souls. There was in a monastery a young woman confined in a state of distraction. I saw her, I knew her case, and that it was not what they thought of it. As soon as I had spoken to her she recovered: but the prioress did not like that I should tell her my thoughts of it, because the person who had brought her thither was her friend. They plagued her more than before, and threw her back again into her distraction.

A sister of another monastery was for eight years past in a deep melancholy unrelieved by any one; for her director increased it by practising remedies contrary to her disorder. I had never been in that monastery; for I did not go into such places, unless I were sent for, as I did not think it right to intrude into them, but left myself to be conducted of Providence. I was very much surprised that at eight o'clock at night one came for me from the prioress. It was in the long days of summer, and being near it, I went. I met with a sister who told me her case; she had gone to such excess, that seeing no remedy for it, she had taken a knife to kill herself; but the knife fell out of her hand; and a person coming to see her had advised her to speak to me. Our Lord made me know at first what the matter was; and that he required her to resign herself to him, instead of resisting him as they had made her do for eight years. I was instrumental to draw her into such a resignation, that she entered at once into a peace of paradise; all her pains and troubles were instantly banished, and never returned since. She has the greatest capacity of any in the house. She was presently so changed as to be the admiration of the whole community. Our Lord

gave her a very great gift of prayer and his continual presence, with a faculty and readiness for every thing. She was given me for a daughter; and a domestick sister, troubled for twenty-two years past, was also delivered from her troubles, and is a very religious woman. That produced a close tie of friendship between the prioress and me, as the wonderful change and the peace of this sister surprised her, she having so often seen her in her terrible pains. I also contracted other such ties in this monastery, where there are souls under the Lord's special regard, whom he drew to himself by the means he had been pleased to make choice of.

CHAPTER XXI.

I WAS moved to read the holy Scripture. It had been some time since I had read at all, not finding in myself any void to be filled. When I began it was given me to write the passage which I read, and instantly upon it was given me its explication, which I also wrote, going on with inconceivable expedition, light being poured in upon me in such a manner, that I found I had in myself treasures of wisdom and knowledge which I had not yet known of. Before I wrote I knew not what I was going to write. After I had written, I remembered nothing of what I wrote; I could not make use of any part of it for the help of souls; but the Lord gave me, at the time I spoke to them, without any application of mine, all that was necessary for them. Thus the Lord caused me go on with explications of the holy Scripture.* I

* All her explications have been published; those on the Old Testament in twelve octavo volumes, and on the New Testament in eight.

had no other book but the Bible, nor made use of any but that, and without ever seeking for any thing. When in writing on the Old Testament I made use of passages of the New, to support what I said, it was without seeking them; they were given me along with the explication; and in writing on the New Testament, and therein making use of passages of the Old, they were given me in like manner without my seeking any thing. I had scarce any time for writing but in the night, allowing only one hour or two to sleep. The Lord made me write with so much purity, that I was obliged to leave off and to begin again, as he was pleased to order. He proved me every way herein. When I wrote by day, often suddenly interrupted, I left the word unfinished, and he afterwards gave me what he pleased. What I wrote was not in my head; that part was kept free and disengaged. If I gave way to any reflection I was punished for it, and could not proceed. And yet I was sometimes not duly attentive to the divine spirit which had moved me to write, thinking I did well to continue it when I had time, even without having the motion and enlightening influence of that spirit for it, from whence it is easy to see some places beautiful and consistent, and others which have neither taste nor unction; such is the difference of the spirit of God from the human and natural spirit. I am ready, however, if ordered to do it, to adjust them according to the present light which is given me. Didst thou not, oh my God, turn me a hundred ways, to prove me whether I was thine without any reserve, through every kind of trial; or whether I had not yet some little interest for myself? My soul became hereby readily pliable to every discovery of the divine will,

whatever kind of humiliations attended me to counterbalance my Lord's favours. What I durst not before touch with the tip of my finger now became my nourishment; but every thing, high or low, was rendered alike to me.

Methinks the Lord acts with his dearest friends as the sea with its waves. It sometimes pushes them against the rocks where they break, sometimes on the sand, or on the mire, and then retakes them into its own depth. Even among the good the greatest part are only souls of *Mercy*, and that is so far well: but to appertain to divine *Justice*, how rare, and yet how great! *Mercy* is all distributive in favour of the creature: but *Justice* destroys every thing of the creature, without sparing any thing. It can demand nothing but for itself; yet voluntary victims, and such as may have no other object but itself in what they suffer.

The lady, who was my particular friend, began to conceive some jealousy on the applauses given me, God so permitting it for the farther purification of her soul through this weakness, and the pain it caused her. Also some confessors began to be uneasy, saying, "It was none of my business to invade their province, and to meddle in the help of souls; and that there were some of their penitents which had an entire openness for me." It was easy for me to observe the difference betwixt those confessors who, in their conducting of souls, seek nothing but God, and those who seek themselves therein; for the first came to see me, and rejoiced greatly at the grace of God bestowed on their penitents, without fixing their attention on the instrument: the others, on the contrary, tried to stir up the town against me. I saw

that they would be in the right to oppose me, if I had intruded of myself; but I could do nothing but what the Lord made me to do. Sometimes there came some of them to dispute with me. There came two friars of the same order with the Collector I have spoken of; one of them, the provincial, a man of profound learning and a great preacher. They came separately, after having studied for several different things to propose to me. They did it; and though they were matters far out of my reach, the Lord made me answer as justly as if I had studied them all my life long; after which I spoke to them as he inspired me. They went away not only convinced and satisfied, but even affected with the love of God.

I still continued writing with a prodigious swiftness; for the hand could scarce follow fast enough the spirit which dictated, and through the whole progress of so long a work I never altered my conduct, nor made use of any other book than the Bible itself. The transcriber, whatever diligence he used, could not copy in five days what I wrote in one night. Whatever is good in it comes from God only. Whatever is otherwise, from myself; I mean from the mixture which I have made, without duly attending to it, of my own impurity with his pure and chaste doctrine. In the day I had scarce time to eat, by reason of the vast numbers of the people which came to me. I wrote the Canticles in a day and a half, and received several visits beside.

Here I may add to what I have said about my writings, that a considerable part of the book of Judges happened by some means to be lost. Being desired to render that book complete, I wrote over again the places lost. Afterwards, when the people were about

removing from this house, they found them where one would never have imagined them to be. My former and latter explications, on comparing them, were found to be perfectly conformable to each other, which greatly surprised persons of knowledge and merit, who attested the truth of it.

There came to see me a counsellor of the parliament, a servant of God, who, finding on my table *a method of Prayer*, which I had written long before, desired me to lend it to him. Having read it and liked it much, he lent it to some of his friends, to whom he thought it might be of service. Every one of them wanted copies of it. He resolved with the good brother to get it printed. The impression was begun, and the approbations given to it. They desired me to write a preface to it. I did so, and thus was that little book printed. This counsellor was one of my intimate friends, and a pattern of piety. The book has already passed through five or six editions; and our Lord has given a great benediction to it. Those good friars took fifteen hundred of them. The devil became so enraged against me on account of the conquests which God made by me, that I was assured he was going to stir up against me a violent persecution. All that gave me no trouble. Let him stir up against me ever so strange persecutions: I know they will all serve to the glory of my God.

[THE TRANSLATOR THUS CONCLUDES THE FIRST VOLUME.]

I conclude this First Volume with Two Expressions of our Blessed SAVIOUR, and some Lines annexed thereto, *viz.*

1. The Queen of the South *shall rise up in the Judgment with this Generation, and shall condemn it, &c.* Mat. xii. 42.

2. *Many shall come from the* East, *and* West, *and shall sit down with* Abraham, *and* Isaac, *and* Jacob, *in the Kingdom of Heaven: but the Children of the Kingdom shall be cast out, &c.* Mat. viii. 11, 12.

THAT all into whose hands these lines may come, may be admitted to join those Worthies *from the* East *and* West, *in that Kingdom*, is my fervent desire. Much work is to be done in order to be fit for it: but it is the best work. All else below the sun is as nothing, compared with it.

Had it been for any *corruptible crown* that M. Guion resigned, laboured and suffered so much, we might censure her for it; but not so justly when we consider that it was for *one which is incorruptible*: which, when obtained, is an infinite recompence for all past sufferings and sacrifices: but the loss of it is far too dear a price for all the present gratifications of corrupt nature; or (most unwisely) chusing to please ourselves, and others, rather than Christ. In such case *the children of the kingdom*, the members of the purest church, or the descendants of the best of men are *cast out*: they forfeit an endless inheritance, having rendered themselves unfit for it.

As it is not yet too late, as the least delay is of the greatest danger, let then every thing which obstructs this fitness, be freely and readily sacrificed, to pur-

chase the pearl of inestimable price. So will the Lord, if we *continue stedfast and immovable* in this disposition, to the end of our days, perfect the glorious Work of our Redemption. He will shield from every assault of the grand enemy, sustain through every probation, comfort with a lively and well grounded hope, and afterwards crown with a happy immortality.

APPENDIX.

The Author of the HISTORY of the Archbishop of Cambray's LIFE, gives the following

SUMMARY of M. GUION's DOCTRINE.

"CHARITY is the source and the end, the rule and consummation of the whole law; of all duties, of all virtues: and the two means of arriving at this perfect love are *Prayer* and the *self-denial* enjoined in the gospel.

Prayer is neither a sweet sensation, nor the charm of an inflamed imagination, nor an abstracted speculative reasoning; but it is the entire bent of the soul toward its divine Origin. It is what the most simple are capable of; what nothing should interrupt; and what is compatible with all the duties of our mortal state.

It is necessary at first to use vigorous efforts, repeated acts, and frequent returnings to God, that we may be separated from all the objects of our passions, *or natural inclinations*, avoid all occasions by which they are excited, recollect and shut ourselves up within our spiritual nature, and by that means gradually gain a habit of living in the divine presence, after a more simple, uniform, and intimate manner.

Whilst the mind thus ascends towards the sovereign truth, the heart disengages itself, not only from all its grosser affections, but even from all its most refined views and pursuits. And here we may discover the source of two very different operations of the divine Wisdom, viz.

God in the beginning sets our hearts free from impure pleasures, by the taste he gives us of a heavenly delectation. Animated by the tender sentiments of a new-born love, we exercise ourselves with a noble and masculine vigour in all the labours of an active virtue. The soul, ravished with the divine amiableness, is no longer to be touched with the seducing charms of a profane sensuality.

He then proceeds to another operation in us, in order to destroy the mistaken love of ourselves; and this not by *pleasures* but by *sufferings*. After having weaned us from earthly objects, he shuts us up within the solitary prison of our own beings, to the end that we may experience the darkness, weakness and emptiness of that being. He sets before our eyes all the secret abominations of *our self-love*, the impurity of those virtues that flow from it, and its usurpations upon the rights of the Divinity. What a source of pains must this be to a creature idolatrous of itself and of its own virtue? The soul finds nothing in itself that is worthy of its love; and, being no longer able to endure its own society, flies off and forsakes itself, to plunge, and to be swallowed up, in the love of that object who alone is lovely.

Then it is that the importunate noise of the senses, and of the imagination, becomes hushed; the tumultuous hurry of our thoughts and passions ceases; and the whole soul, being brought into *a profound silence*, adores him in spirit and in truth, whose perfections are beyond all expression, and above all conception.

But this *Silence* is such as excludes only useless reflections, superfluous reasonings, and barren speculations, which interrupt the action of the devout heart. In loving God purely, we believe every thing he

teaches, obey every thing he commands, hope for every thing he promises: for this charity, being predominant, produces, animates, and perfects in us all the virtues human and divine."

END OF THE SUMMARY.

Such was the doctrine which M. Guion experimentally learned in Christ's spiritual academy, and which she was constrained to publish both by word and writing, viz. the necessity of the operation of the leaven of Christ's kingdom, to purge out all the old leaven of corrupt *self*, to die daily to that, in order to pass into, and live wholly in God, while here. The selfish ecclesiasticks of France, with their blind dependents, could not bear so pure a doctrine: and therefore stirred up the storms of wrath and of violent persecution against her, which she bore like a true christian, praying for the salvation and happiness of her persecutors.

Now hear what account one who writes as an enemy gives of M. Guion, Abbe Fenelon, (or Archbishop of Cambray) and their converts about the Court of France.

The Author of a book entitled *Annales de la cour et de Paris pour les annees* 1697, and 1698, (that is, *Annals of the court and of Paris for the years* 1697 *and* 1698) published at the time when the doctrine of pure love was publickly contested, says, "All the friends of the Abbe Fenelon were the friends of Madam Guion. The Duke of Beauviliers who was governor of the children of France, was suspected of giving in to her errors, with the duke of Chevreuse, and their families. The whole house of Charoste was also suspected of giving in to these new opinions:

but what hindered scrupulous minds from condemning them was, that there were no people, either in the court, or in all France, whose morals were more regular, or whose lives were more christian-like than theirs."

A noble confession this, in favour of Fenelon and Guion, drawn by the force of truth from the pen of a writer, who (in the same page) stigmatizes their opinions with the names of Heresy and Quietism!*

* Quietism has received that name from a professed state of quietude in the soul, having learned to acquiesce in the will of God under every trial and dispensation. The sect of Quietists made a great noise toward the close of the last century. They professed a pure, sublime and perfect devotion, an entire disinterested love of God, free from all selfish considerations, loving him for himself, on account of his own perfections, independently of any rewards or punishments.

A body of men like these, called the Illuminati, sprang up in Spain about the year 1575. They had a great number of followers; most of them were apprehended and clapped up in the Inquisition of Cordova †; some of them were put to death, and the rest abjured their doctrines. The like body revived in France in 1634. But they were so hotly pursued by Lewis XIII. that they were soon destroyed.

N. B. The Quietists were of the Romish church, but the Pietists, of a later date, sprung up among the Protestants in Germany. Some of the latter are charged with gross errors in doctrine, some are said to be only visionaries, some of them very good and honest people who, disgusted with the coldness and formality of other churches, and won with the piety of these, have joined themselves to them.

† Cordova a large city in the province of Andalusia, on the river Guadalquevir, seventy-two miles North-east from Seville.

NOTES,

OMITTED IN THEIR PROPER PLACES.

Recollects, (page 137) were a congregation of reformed Franciscans, called also *Friars minor, of St. Francis of the Strict Observance*; established about the year 1530, by Pope Clement VII.

Bernabites or *Barnabites* (page 147) were a Monastic Order, said to be so called from the church of St. *Barnabas* at Milan in Italy, where they were first established in 1533. They profess St. Paul for their patron, and call themselves Canons (or Regulars) of St. Paul.

Jansenism. (page 174) The doctrine of *Cornelius Jansen*, commonly called Jansenius, Bishop of Ypres, in Flanders, respecting Grace and Free-will. This doctrine was published, after his death, in 1638, in a book entitled *Augustinus*, and by the Bishops of France was reduced into five Propositions.

The 1st was, That some commands of God are impossible for righteous men to accomplish, the Grace being withheld by which they should be enabled to perform them.

2d. A man never resists Inward Grace, &c.

The Jansenists appear to have been pretty numerous in some parts of the French territories, but in a private way; not animated by that noble principle, which alone enables to maintain the truth with christian boldness; and to stand the assaults of opposition, in its defence.

Prebend, (page 302) properly *Prebendary*. One who has a prebend, or stipend allowed him out of the estate of a Cathedral, for his service in easing or assisting the Bishop therein.

Canon, (page 341.) A Dignitary in a Cathedral, bearing that name or title.

In regard to the ineffable communications in silence mentioned by by M. Guion (Part II. Chap. xiii, &c.) the reader may see, and compare therewith, the account given in England of the excellencies of the silent worship of Almighty God, and spiritual communications therein, given in Barclay's Apology for the people called Quakers, Proposition xi. Sect. vi. vii, viii, xii, xiii, &c.

The following Note is also made by the Translator.

N. B. Since the work began to be printed, I have met with several objectors to the very front of it, declaring, M. Guion was no Lady.

Now for the better information of all such, as well as in vindication of the deceased Author of *an account of her life and writings*,* (published by him in English, with some valuable extracts from them, above thirty years ago) who has all along given her the same title, I think it necessary here to observe, that though she herself, through the whole history of her life, has past it over in silence, as being entirely divested of all regard to worldly titles; yet the French editor of her spiritual works, in a note at the beginning of his preface, has acquainted the public, that she gained this title from her marriage, her husband being one of the Lords of the canal of Briare, which supplies a communication between two of the finest rivers in France, viz. the Seine which runs by Paris, Rouen, &c. into the English channel; and the Loire which runs by the cities of Nivers, Orleans, Blois, Tours, Angers and Nantz into the bay of Biscay. The title thus obtained she continued to bear to the end of her days. In regard to her father, she does not tell us his name, nor give any other account of him, than that of his piety and virtues.

* Viz. Josiah Martin, of London, a man of learning, humility and fervent piety.

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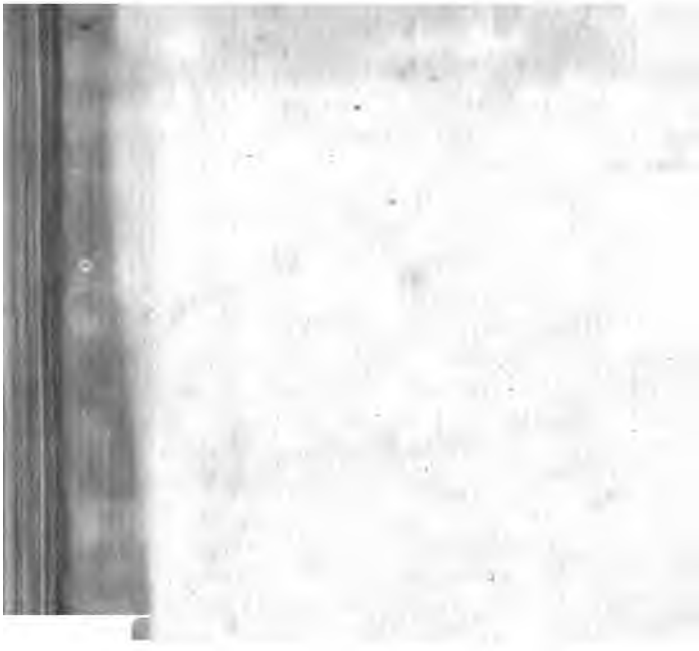

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